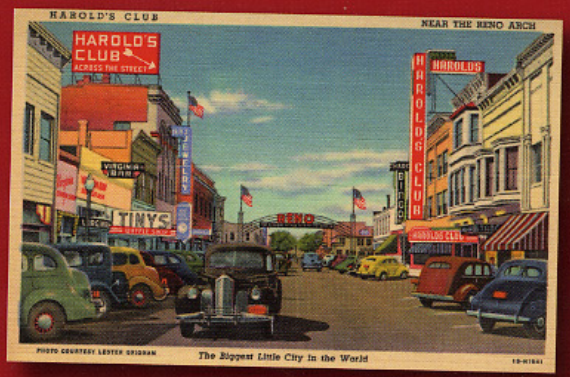
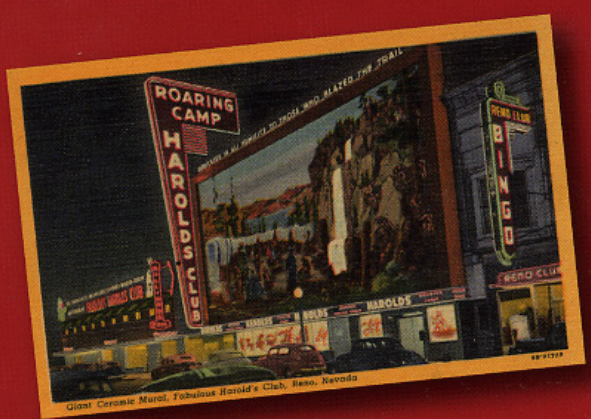




A Family Affair

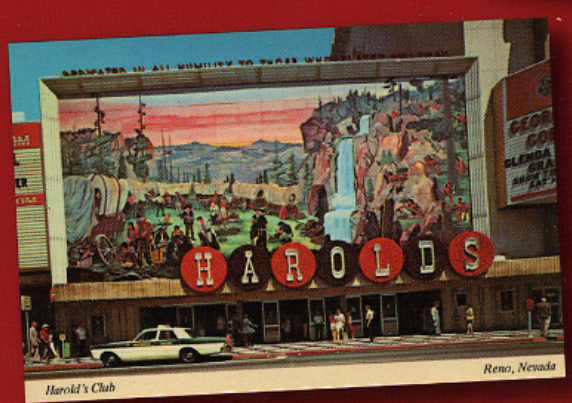
HAROLDS CLUB and the Smiths Remembered











A Family Affair: Harolds Club and the Smiths Remembered

Interviewees: Thirty-three former employees of Harolds Club and five members of the Smith family
Interviewed: 1997-2000
Published: 2003
Interviewers: Ken Adams, Mary Ellen Glass, Dwayne Kling
UNOHP Catalog #195

Description

A Family Affair is the story of Harolds Club and the remarkable family that owned it. It is also a revealing chronicle of the casino gaming industry's colorful, vigorous, and sometimes outrageous youth.

Nevada's legislature legalized casino gambling in 1931. In the years following, many people who had been running illegitimate or quasi-legal games of chance elsewhere relocated to Nevada. Among them was a semi-itinerant family of carnival game concessionaires named Smith. They founded Harolds Club in Reno in 1935, starting in a rented "hole-in-the-wall" storefront.

The chief protagonists of A Family Affair are four men of uncommonly disparate character and personality. Raymond I. "Pappy" Smith, his sons Harold and Raymond A., and his grandson Harold Jr. almost routinely fought among themselves, but they stayed together and apparently energized each other, cared for one another, and enjoyed one another's company most of the time. They were capable of audacious strokes of genius in operating their club, but they also broke every accepted rule of business and management, doing many things that should have led to the ruin of their enterprise, but somehow did not.

No casino owners were ever more idiosyncratic in their approach to the business (or more honest) than the Smiths. They were also among the most successful, and, from the 1940s to the early 1960s, Harolds Club was the largest casino in Nevada and probably the most widely known in the world. In popular memory, the Smiths and their club have come to exemplify "the good old days" of the gaming industry, when personal connections mattered more than experience and credentials, gaming regulations were weak and poorly enforced, and the bottom line wasn't everything.

It is widely accepted that Pappy Smith's try-anything approach to promotions, advertising, and publicity stunts gave the Smiths an advantage over their early competitors in Reno, and that Harolds Club further benefitted from being the first casino to employ women as dealers. Perhaps the most significant factor in the club's success in the 1940s was World War II, when a steady stream of servicemen who were stationed at military facilities near Reno flowed through the casino.

A Family Affair commences with memories of wartime operations of Harolds Club, as remembered by former employees and some members of the family. The club is remembered by former employees and customers almost as if it were one big extended family. It was so much fun to work at the club that many people actually looked forward to going in every day.

(Continued on next page.)

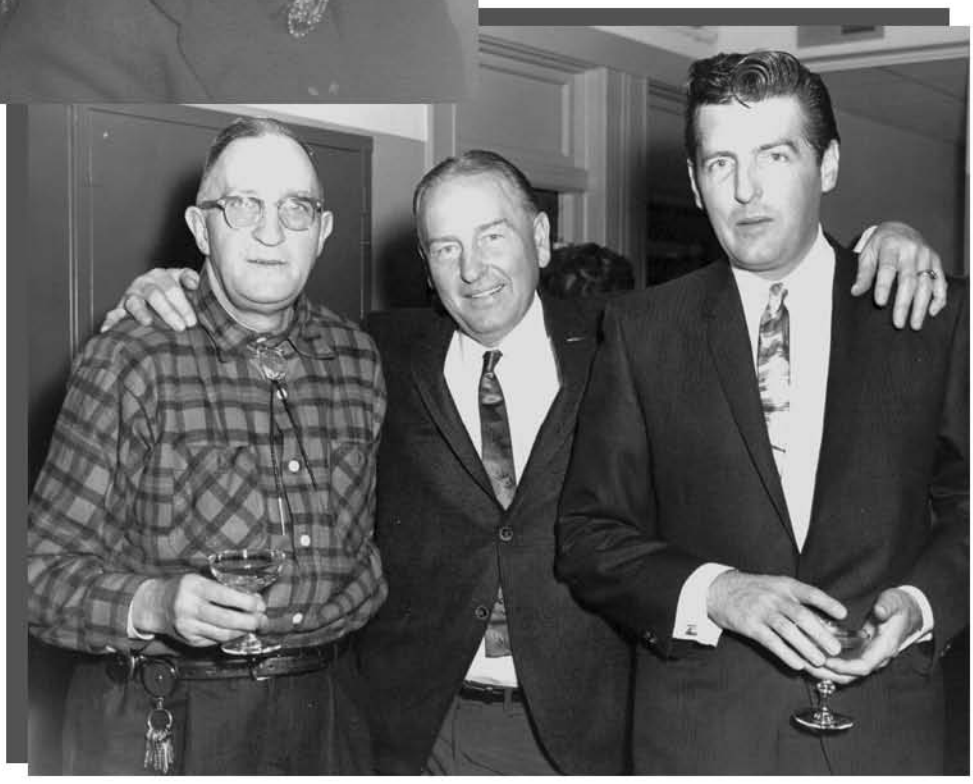
Description (continued)

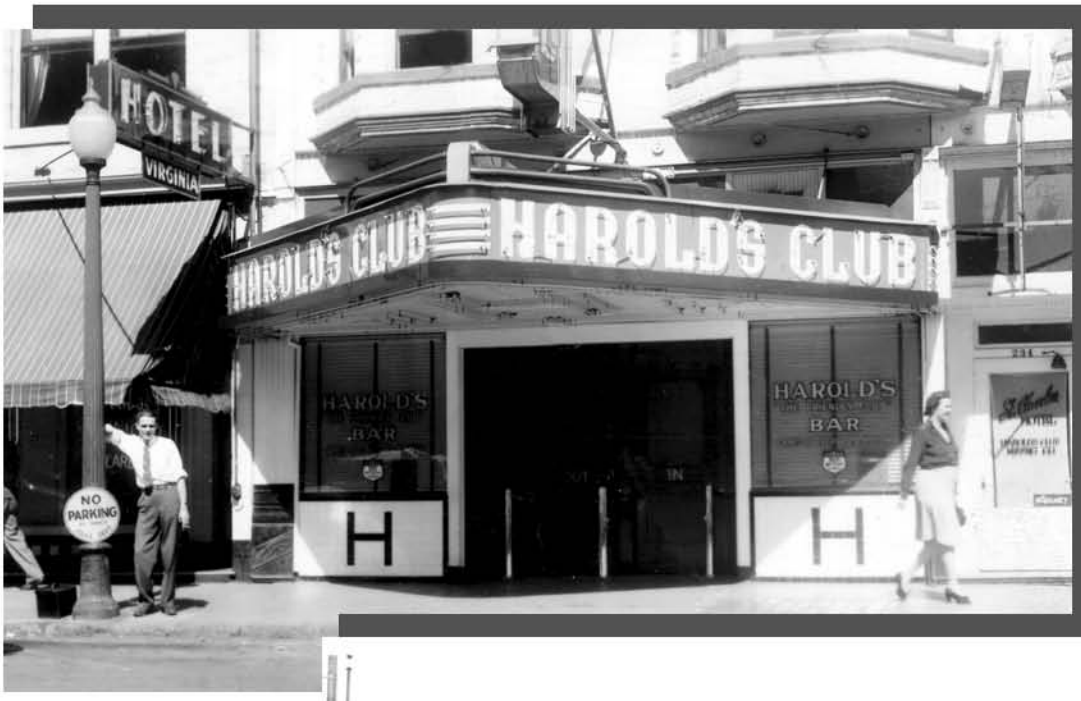
Pappy Smith died in 1967. When Howard Hughes's Summa Corporation bought Harolds Club in 1970, their managers quickly set about changing the culture of the operation to bring it into line with their corporate values. Employees found the changes so disturbing that in less than a year, most had fled to other casinos. An era was ending in the history of Reno's gaming industry, and Harolds Club was the first casino to experience conversion to the new ways.

A Family Affair

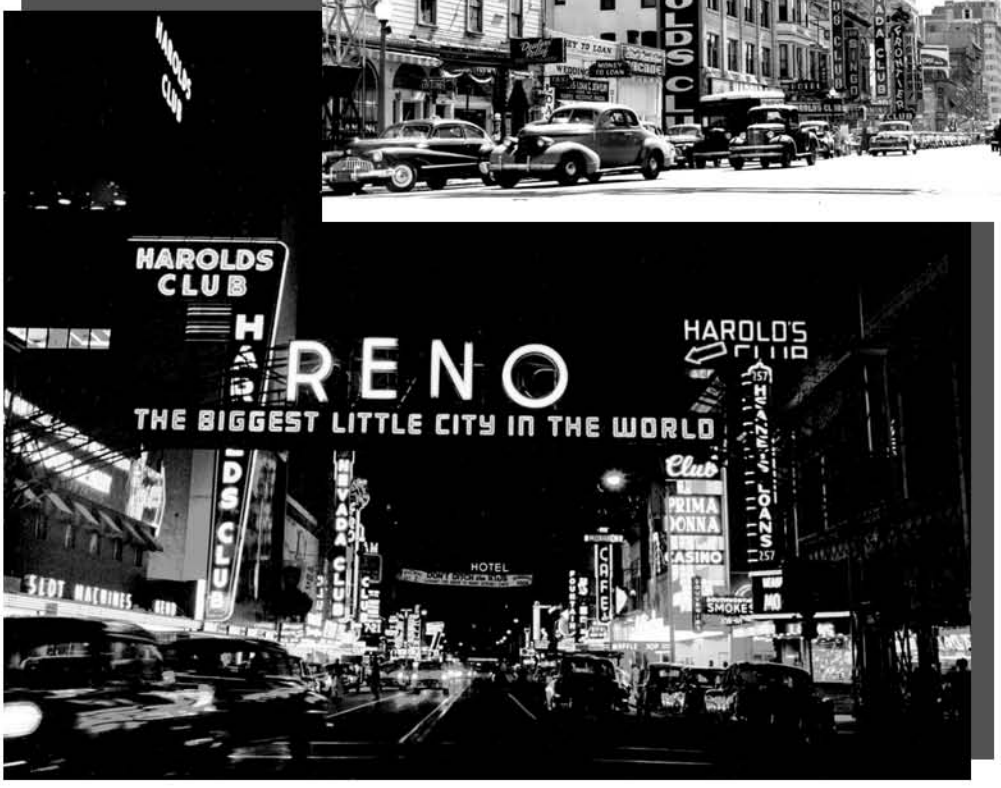







HOTEL
VIRGINIA
HAROLD'S CLUB
HAROLD'S CLUB
HAROLD'S BAR
HAROLD'S BAR
NO PARKING
H
H


RENO
THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD
FAMOUS
HAROLDS CLUB
NEVADA CLUB


HAROLDS CLUB
HAROLDS CLUB
RENO
THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD
HAROLD'S CLUB
Club
PRIMA DONNA
CASINO
JOANS
NEVADA CLUB
HOTEL
SLOT MACHINES
SMOKE

A Family Affair

HAROLDS CLUB and the Smiths Remembered

From oral history interviews
conducted by Dwayne Kling,
a narrative composed
by R. T. King

University of Nevada Oral History Program

Publication of *A Family Affair* was made possible in part by gifts from the Robert Z. Hawkins Foundation, the Smith family, and former Harolds Club employees and scholarship recipients.

Copyright 2003
University of Nevada Oral History Program
Reno, Nevada 89557-0099
ohp@unr.nevada.edu
http://www.unr.edu/oralhistory

All rights reserved. Published 2003
Printed in the United States of America
Second impression 2005

Publication Staff:
Director: R.T. King
Assistant Director: Mary Larson
Production Manager: Kathleen M. Coles
Production Assistants: Brooke McIntyre, Beth Opperman, Linda Sommer, Allison Tracy, Elisabeth Williams, Kathryn Wright-Ross

ISBN: 1-56475-388-3

Employee loyalty came mainly from Pappy, but Harold and Raymond complemented it. Harrah's Club had a hell of a lot more discipline, but for downright loyalty towards a family, I've never seen anything like what the Smiths had.

Dan Orlich

Harolds Club was family, strictly family, and that can work to your disadvantage. Nobody had the final say-so.

Harry Bergmann

Harolds Club was like a big family. It wasn't just fly-by-night employment—you knew everyone's families, you knew their kids. They put their kids through college working there, and they retired from there. There will never be another casino like Harolds Club.

Laura June Smith Barnes

It was common practice at Harolds for husbands and wives to work on the same shift. The Smiths encouraged families to work there, and they liked it when a man and wife would work together. The only thing they didn't do was let a man and his wife work together on the same dice table.

Dwayne Kling

Even though we had a family atmosphere, everybody shook a little when Harold Sr. came through. He would fire girls right off the table, and the next day Pappy would hire them back.

Phyllis Smith

It's really a tribute to the "family" quality of the club that the Harolds Club Pioneers were formed and continue to meet. Their members are former employees, people that worked there when the club had such a happy, close environment . . . I don't know of any other working place that had that kind of environment.

Twyila Smith Whear

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xiii

INTRODUCTION xv

PART ONE: SMITHS ON SMITHS

FAMILY TREE 2

DIANE SMITH 3

Harold Sr.; Lois; Harold Jr.

GEORGE R. SMITH 15

Raymond I.; Harold Sr.; Raymond A.; leased property; concessions; slot machines; Harolds Club's board; sale of Harolds

LAURA JUNE SMITH BARNES 23

Harold Sr., Dorothy; Raymond I.; twenty-one; Harold Jr.

PHYLLIS SMITH 33

Harold Jr.; Raymond I.; Harold Sr.; Dorothy

TWYILA SMITH WHEAR 41

Raymond I.; a kidnapping attempt; lola; Harold Sr.

Part Two: In Employee Memory

HARRY BERGMANN 58

Raymond I.; slot machines; the vault; refunds; Harold Jr.; "industrial relations"

DAVID CABLE 67

Key men; slot machines; dice; twenty-one; floor managers; security; card counters; the catwalk

CHARLES CLIFFORD 77

Change aprons; slot machines; dice; chuck-a-luck; Harold Sr.; floor managers; comps; Raymond I.

GEORGE KERR 93

Harolds Club photographer; advertising, publicity and promotions; Harold Sr.; Raymond I.

DWAYNE KLING 105

Dice; Harold Sr.; cheaters; floor men; security; card counters; Raymond I.; gun collection; gun club; sale of the club

LESLIE S. KOFOED 119

Pony Express Motel; club expansion; public relations; Guy Lent; promotions and publicity; Raymond I.; Harolds Club Scholarships; slot machines; rhythm players; system players; card counters; silver dollars; Raymond I. and the communists; Harold Sr.; entertainment

AL LAZZARONE 139

Harolds Club's softball and baseball teams; dealing twenty-one and dice; the gun club; Raymond I.; sale of the club; union organizers

DAN ORLICH 147

Gun club and trap shooting; advertising, publicity, and promotions; Raymond I; Harold Sr.; refunds; the seventh floor; sale of the club

ROY POWERS 159

Publicity, advertising, and promotions; widening U.S. 40; Raymond I.; Harold Sr.; booking entertainers; "Harolds Club or Bust;" camel races; air races; 1960 Olympics; Hollywood productions; tours; Reno Arch

WILLIAM SALAS 177

Keno; the Beck Corporation; sale of the club

JACK STREETER 189

Harold Sr.; an alleged kidnapping attempt; sale of the club; a trust fund for Harold Sr.; Harold Jr.'s Yugoslavian club

DARL VOSS 195

Dice; Raymond I.; promotional schemes; twenty-one; security; floor men; Harold Sr.; expansions; the gun club; shift managers; slot machines; sale of Harolds Club

PART THREE: DEALERS REMINISCE

HIRED IN THE 1940S 219

Midge Hogan, Margaret Brown, Dorothy Whitton-Canby, Louise Jones, Lucille Vinson Peterson, Mary Bletcher, Marjorie Voss, Pat Applewhite, Jean Pinkerton, and Rosalie Beasley

HIRED IN THE 1950S 249

Cleo Della Quadri Chiatovich, Marcia Schwarz, Pauline Zahnd, Arline Johnston Harper, Yvonne "Todd" Davis, and Jim Wilbur

HIRED IN THE 1960S 287

Rose Kling, Wilma "Willie" Evans, Sally Ennes, Bonnie Good Matthews, and Meri Price

GLOSSARY 313

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS 315

INDEX 317

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Publishing is an expensive enterprise, and one not lightly undertaken. Proceeds from sales of a reasonably priced book printed in a short run of under 5,000 copies (such as this one) will never be sufficient to cover production costs. The UNOHP's goal in publishing is not to make a profit, but to bring its work to the public in an accessible form. However, although our interests are not commercial, neither can we afford to lose money on a title. We must secure publishing subsidies for every book we bring out.

Roy Powers and Dwayne Kling, assisted by Robyn Powers and Jodie Manatt, did a splendid job of organizing and conducting the fundraising for publication of *A Family Affair*. We are very grateful to them and to the Robert Z. Hawkins Foundation, which helped get the effort started with a $1,000 challenge grant.

Although there are always individuals, companies, and foundations willing to help get our books into print, never before have so many answered the call for one project. Forty-two checks came in, in amounts ranging from over $1,000 to under $100, many from retirees on fixed incomes. We are deeply appreciative of this support for our work from such a broad spectrum of the community.

Publication of *A Family Affair* was made possible in part by gifts from: Western Nevada Supply (Rich Reviglio); Robert E. and Twyila Smith Whear; Laura June Smith Barnes; Rosalie Beasley and Jim Wilson; Reed Bingham; Owen S. Bunker; David and Patti Cable; Catherine Clinch and Brock Riedell; David and Arlene Cochran; Bruno and Marie Coli; Robert and Audrey Ferrari; Joan M. Hallahan; The Harolds Club Pioneers; Dr. Carl M. Herrera; Gerald and Billie Hunt; Clark and Pamela Jones; Dwayne and Rose Kling; the Lazzarone Family Trust (Albert and Dorothy Lazzarone); Robert H. Linka; Frank and Lois Mathews; the Charles N. Mathewson Foundation; Bebe Ann Mills; Ronald and Patricia Myers; Ann and John North; Terrance Oliver; Dan Orlich; Roy and Jackie Powers; Cork and Carolyn Proctor; Virginia Schellin; Diane Smith; Louise and Bill Van Arsdale; Anita C. Vandenberg; Marjorie and Darl Voss; Richard E. Williamson; Lloyd and Shirley Barnes; Bobbie Hepler; Douglas and Marie Hopkins; Lucille Peterson; George Stone; Saundra Walker; and the Zahnd Family Trust (Pauline and Walter Zahnd).

This publication arises from the UNOHP's Gaming History Project, which is supported by the Jack Douglass Memorial Fund for Gaming History and by gifts from Ken Adams, the late Sharkey Begovich, John

Douglass, William A. and Jan Douglass, the Charles N. Mathewson Foundation, and the Peppermill Hotel Casino.

In preparing the manuscript of *A Family Affair* for publication, we had the enthusiastic and capable assistance of several individuals and institutions, without whose participation the work would have suffered. In no particular order, we are endebted to the following for helping to make this publication possible: Neal Cobb, noted local historian and Sheriff of the Reno Corral of Westerners International, who advised us and gave us access to his remarkable photo collection; Fitzgeralds Casino & Hotel, which houses much of what remains of the Harolds Club files and in-house photos, and generously allowed us to copy anything that we needed; and Eric Moody and the Nevada State Historical Society and Museum, who provided us with needed photos, information, and an advance copy of the John Wesley Noble biography of Pappy Smith, which they will publish in the fall of 2003.

INTRODUCTION

Nevada's legislature legalized casino gambling (or "gaming," as the industry would have it) in 1931 with the passage of AB 98. Under the act, gaming owners and operators had to be licensed by the state. Since publicly traded corporations were owned by their stockholders, and it was impossible to track stock sales and investigate and license all stockholders, corporations were effectively shut out of the gaming industry. Given the small scale and morally objectionable reputation of the business in its early years, it was unlikely that any would have been interested anyway.

The vast majority of the first owners and operators came not from the established world of business and finance, but from the demimonde of illegitimate or quasi-legal games of chance. In the years following 1931, many who had operated outside the law elsewhere took up residence in Nevada to practice their craft in the only place where it was legally sanctioned. They lived in the communities where they operated, and most were direct, hands-on managers of what they owned. Despite the often unorthodox business and management practices of these pioneers, the casino gaming industry in Reno and Las Vegas prospered, but its growth was inhibited by owners' limited ability to borrow money or otherwise finance expansion and improvements. Some turned to organized crime for help, particularly in Las Vegas.

By the mid-1960s, much of the stigma attached to gaming in its early years had fallen away. Tighter regulation of the industry had curbed the cheating, skimming, and other dishonest practices that were not uncommon among early operators, and organized crime was being pushed from the foothold it had gained in the 1950s. More importantly, it had become clear to the corporate establishment that gaming was a business with extraordinarily high profit margins. They wanted in. Thirty-eight years after legalizing gaming, Nevada's legislature, with passage of the Corporate Gaming Act of 1969, laid the statutory foundation for a radical and sweeping transformation of the industry. Henceforth, publicly traded companies would be permitted to participate. Corporations quickly entered the field and soon dominated it, buying up a significant number of existing casinos and building others from the ground up.

In the corporate model, ownership is rarely local, and management and ownership are separate. To run their acquisitions and new properties, corporate headquarters sent in people with formal education and training in business, accounting, law, etc., replacing experienced oldtimers who had come up through the ranks from the gaming floor. In the process, everything about casinos changed, including the way employees and customers were treated. While the changes undoubtedly led to greater efficiencies and profitability of operation, they marked the end of an era when casinos often reflected the personalities of their owners.

Perhaps no owners from the pre-corporate era were more idiosyncratic (or, apparently, more honest) than the Smiths, the family that owned and operated Harolds Club from 1935 to 1970. They were also among the most successful, and, from the 1940s to the early 1960s, Harolds Club did more business than any other casino in the state. In popular memory, the Smiths and their club have come to exemplify the "good old days" of the gaming industry in Reno, when personal connections mattered more than experience and credentials, gaming regulations were weak and poorly enforced, and the bottom line wasn't everything. *A Family Affair* is the story of the Smiths and their club, as remembered by former employees and some members of the family. It is also a chronicle of the casino gaming industry's colorful, vigorous, and sometimes outrageous youth.

The Smith family's roots were in the carnival concession business, but not much else can be said with certainty about their experiences prior to their arrival in Reno.* The patriarch of the family, Raymond I. Smith (he would come to be known as "Pappy"), was born in 1887 in Addison Township, Vermont. Raymond was still a teenager when his father died, leaving him and his brother to operate the small family farm with their widowed mother, an endeavor of which all three quickly tired. Raymond was soon married to a local girl, Dora Pigeon. When he was twenty years old, he left Vermont with his young wife and their infant son, Raymond A., following his mother and brother to Colorado Springs, Colorado.

As it turned out, Raymond's Colorado landlord was a retired carnival barker who owned a "wheel of fortune." Raymond found the device fascinating. He saw its potential to free him from laboring for a living, and he persuaded its owner to sell him the wheel and teach him how to use it. In the summer of 1908, at a fair in Palmer Lake, Colorado, Raymond put the wheel in operation, getting a shaky start on what would become his life's work—extracting profit from games of chance. For the next ten summers, with mixed success, he and Dora pitched their concession and spun the wheel in fairs and carnivals in the Midwest and New England. They made money, sometimes a lot of it, but Raymond still had to take various winter jobs to make ends meet. In 1918, Dora left him, taking with her their sons, Raymond A. and Harold.

*Much of what follows in this introduction was gleaned from John Wesley Noble's manuscript on the life of Raymond I. Smith, *Scissorbill Smith.* Written in the 1960s, it will be published in the fall of 2003 by the Nevada State Historical Society. There is little extant written documentation to support Noble's work, which is drawn primarily from interviews, and some of its details are in dispute. In this, of course, it resembles the oral histories from which *A Family Affair* is assembled. While there is no reason to doubt the general accuracy of either, diamond-hard precision is not their long suit.

By 1920 Raymond had gravitated to the endless summer of the Los Angeles area. Still running a wheel of fortune game, he paid $500 for a concession spot on the Venice Pier, which was an amusement park extending out from the beach. (A bingo game on the pier was operated by John Harrah, who was then the mayor of Venice. Harrah was the father of Bill Harrah, who would show up in Reno not long after the Smiths to start a small bingo parlor that eventually became the biggest casino in town.)

Raymond soon opened another concession at nearby Ocean Park, this one with an "electronic" wheel of fortune featuring flashing lights to draw crowds. However, although his southern California concessions were doing all right, it wasn't long before he learned of a greater opportunity—a grand new amusement park was being developed at San Francisco's Ocean Beach. So, a couple of years after opening his Venice Pier operation, Raymond took his wheels and other equipment and relocated to San Francisco, where he enjoyed immediate success. The number and variety of his concessions grew, and he expanded his operations along the Ocean Beach midway.

Raymond's sons were living with their mother in Cleveland, but each summer from 1924 to 1928 they were permitted to join their father and work in his Ocean Beach concessions, learning how to make a living from games of chance. In 1928, when Raymond A. graduated from high school, the younger Harold decided that an eleventh grade education was enough for him, and the two moved together to San Francisco to join their father permanently. Harold had taken to his dad's business like a natural, and he became a full time carny. Aspiring to other things, Raymond A. took a job with a bank, continuing to work for his dad on weekends.

With the crash of the stock market and the onset of the Great Depression, Raymond I. (Pappy) had to go on the road again to keep his business afloat. Although he retained concessions at Ocean Beach, for the next several winters he and his helpers also operated in Miami and various places around California, including Tracy, Santa Cruz, and Modesto. California law permitted games of chance as entertainment but prohibited outright gambling, and, as the Depression deepened, state and local law enforcement officials began cracking down on operations like the Smiths', which employed various subterfuges to maintain the appearance of legality.

In 1934, with the carnival concession business in California becoming ever more problematic, the Smiths visited Reno to see what it offered. Satisfied with its potential, in the winter of 1934-35 they rented a space near the center of town that was 25 feet wide and 150 feet long, fronting on Virginia Street and running back to Douglas Alley, two doors from the First National Bank. There is some uncertainty regarding just what role Pappy Smith may have had in this, but when the establishment opened in February 1935, it was named Harold's Club. (For reasons that are unclear, the possessive apostrophe would later be dropped from "Harold's.") Harold and his wife, Dorothy, owned 96 percent of the business, and Raymond A. owned 4 percent. Pappy, who had no fiduciary interest in Harold's Club, had returned to California. (Many years later, Pappy would acquire the 48 percent share of the club that Dorothy retained after her divorce from Harold.)

Harold's Club opened with penny roulette and other carnival games. Initially, it did not do well. Apparently,

Pappy closed down his California operations at the end of the summer of 1935 and moved to Reno to help his sons and daughter-in-law manage their struggling club. He also recruited dependable, hard-working relatives into the business. The club began to replace its unprofitable carnival-type games with dice and twenty-one tables and slot machines, and the Smiths taught themselves how to deal the games and operate a gambling establishment that bore little resemblance to anything in their carny past.

It is widely accepted that Pappy's try-anything approach to promotions, advertising, and publicity stunts gave the Smiths an advantage over their early competitors in Reno, and that Harolds Club further benefitted from being the first and (for awhile) only casino to employ women as dealers. However, perhaps the most significant factor in the club's success in the 1940s was World War II. Building up to and during the war, thousands of servicemen were stationed at Army and Navy bases and other military facilities near Reno, and a steady stream of them flowed through the casinos. All the operators in town were making money; the Smiths just seemed to be making more and perhaps having more fun doing it. Harolds Club kept adding gaming tables and slot machines, filling their space to capacity and requiring the first of many somewhat haphazard expansions that were to occur over the years. After the war a great many veterans would return to Reno on vacation with their families, and some would come back to be employed at Harolds Club.

Commencing with memories of wartime operations, *A Family Affair* tells the rest of the story of the Smiths and their club. The chief protagonists are four men of uncommonly disparate character and personality (Pappy, Harold, Raymond A., and Harold Jr.), who fought among themselves, but stayed together and apparently energized each other, cared for one another, and enjoyed one another's company most of the time. They were capable of audacious strokes of genius, but they also broke every accepted rule of business and management, doing many things that should have led to the ruin of their enterprise, but did not. Harolds Club rose to become one of the most successful casinos in Nevada, remaining so for over twenty years before going into a decline that led to its sale in 1970.

In a sense, the Smith men and their wives (each was married multiple times) and children could be said to have made up the nuclear family of Harolds Club; but the club is also remembered by former employees and customers almost as if it were one big warm-hearted (albeit somewhat eccentric) extended family, and they were all part of it. Customers were cautioned not to risk more than they could lose, and when they did anyway, management would often refund a portion of their losses. Employees kept their tips (almost unheard of in the business), were very loosely supervised, were pampered with perks, and could count on the Smiths to take care of them if an emergency arose in their personal lives. Perhaps most telling, Harolds Club is remembered by many as the only casino where it was so much fun to work that people actually looked forward to going in every day. One long-time employee even went so far as to liken it to "a paid vacation."

Pappy Smith died in 1967. When Howard Hughes's Summa Corporation bought Harolds Club from Pappy's widow and his sons in 1970, their managers quickly set about changing the culture of the operation to bring it into line with their corporate values. Employees

found the changes so disturbing that they left in droves. An era was ending in the history of Reno's gaming industry, and Harolds Club was the first casino to experience conversion to the new ways.

This collection of memories of the Smiths and their casino arises from research and interviews done by oral historian Dwayne Kling. Mr. Kling brought forty years of experience in gaming to the project, supported by considerable research into the history of the industry in northern Nevada. He is an adept interviewer and was quite successful in drawing information out of his chroniclers. The interviews addressed a broad range of topics. Combined, they give a fascinating, insiders' look at the lives of the Smith men, their wives and families, and the operation of their club.

Dwayne Kling earned a bachelor's degree in economics and business administration from St. Mary's College. After service in the army during the Korean War, he played professional baseball in the New York Yankee organization. A skilled fielder, but unable to hit major league pitching with sufficient success, in 1954 Kling gave up his baseball aspirations and took a job with Harolds Club in Reno as a change apron. From this modest beginning, a rewarding career in gaming developed, and from 1971 to 1981 he was co-owner and general manager of the Silver Spur Casino. When that casino was sold, he went on to several other management positions in Reno gaming, retiring from The Virginian Hotel-Casino in 1995 as casino manager.

Following Kling's retirement, Ken Adams, the University of Nevada Oral History Program's (UNOHP) gaming history coordinator, recruited him to work on our gaming history series. He did the interviews upon which we based our 1999 book on Bill Harrah and his clubs, *Every Light Was On*, and our 2002 book on Pete Cladianos Jr., *My Father's Son.* He is currently working on our project on gaming regulation in Nevada. In addition to his work for the UNOHP, Kling is the author of *The Rise of the Biggest Little City: An Encyclopedic History of Reno Gaming, 1931-1981.* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000.)

The book at hand, *A Family Affair*, was edited and partially re-written from 1,200 pages of raw transcript. Its oral origins notwithstanding, in general the text reads like that of any other book, but the reader will encounter two unconventional devices that are employed to represent important parts of the dynamic of spoken language: [laughter] appears when a chronicler laughs in amusement or to express irony; and ellipses are used to indicate halting speech . . . or a dramatic pause. As aids to the reader, we also provide a glossary of terms and a family tree of the principal members of the Smith family who are mentioned in the book.

The individual stories that make up the first two of the book's three parts are greatly removed from the verbatim transcripts of the interviews upon which they are based. They have been composed to read as first-person narratives. Before publication, each chronicler who contributed to Parts One and Two, with the exception of two who are deceased, reviewed his or her narrative and affirmed in writing that it is an accurate interpretation. For reasons that should be immediately apparent, it was not possible to compose a narrative from the moderated group reminiscences of former dealers that make up Part Three.

As with all its oral histories, while the UNOHP can vouch for the authenticity of *A Family Affair*, it makes no claim that the recollections upon which the book is based are entirely free of error. This is

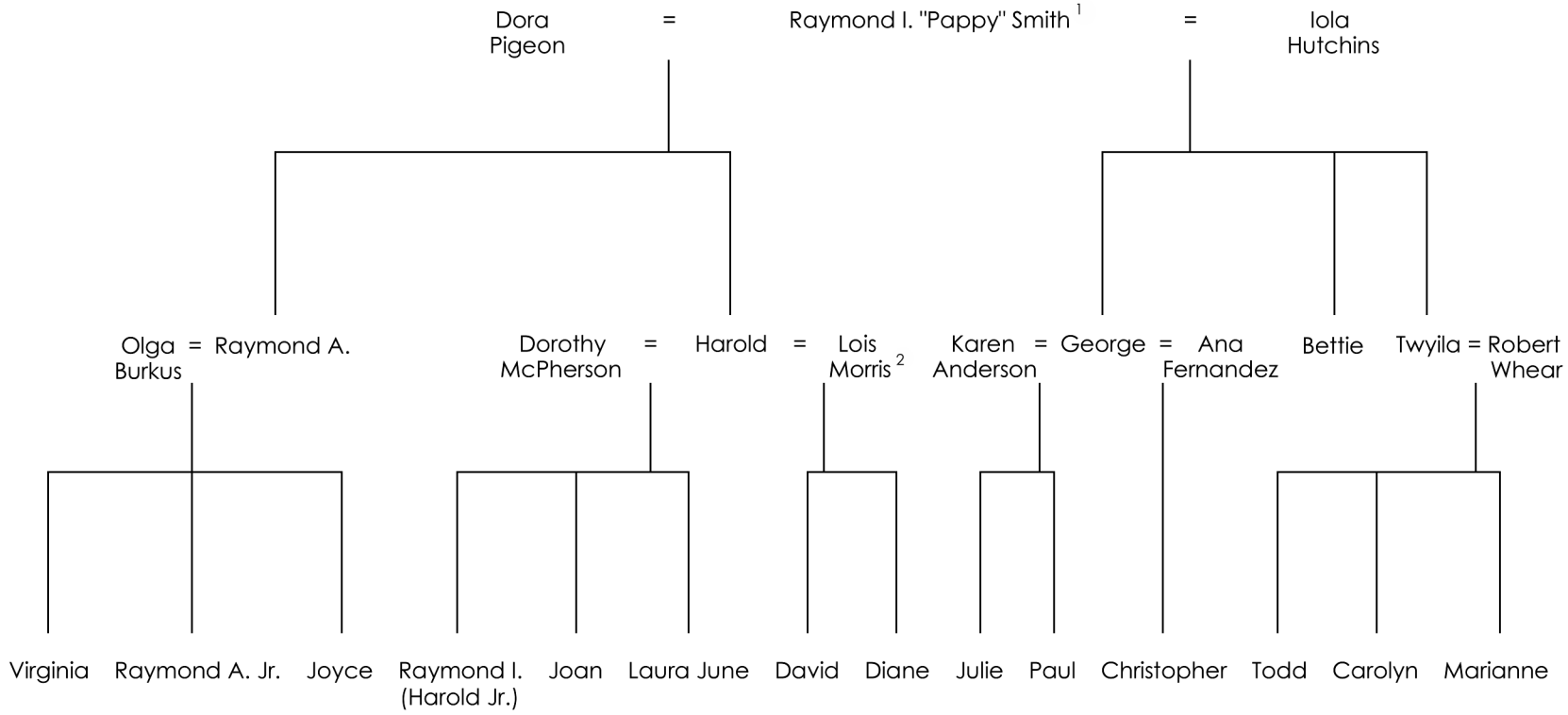
personal history; this is the remembered past. Copies of the tape recordings of the interviews which are the source of this book are housed in the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada, where they can be heard by appointment and with the permission of the chronicler.

R. T. KING
University of Nevada, Reno

PART I
Smiths on Smiths

The Smith Family

The following constitutes a partial family tree for the Smith family. It is not meant to be comprehensive, but it does show the principals in Harolds Club during the years when it was owned by the Smiths (1930s through 1970). The tree starts with the patriarch, Raymond I. Smith, and includes his children and grandchildren. Note that while not all marriages are represented here, all children and grandchildren are listed.



1. Pappy Smith's stepson, Fred—the son of his second wife, Jessie Willmarth, by another marriage—changed his name to "Smith," but he was never formally adopted.
2. Harold Smith Sr. adopted David and Diane Smith, who were his wife Lois's children from an earlier marriage.

1

Diane Smith

Diane Smith was born in Reno in 1945, the daughter of Chester and Lois Morris. Her parents divorced not long after her birth. In 1947, Lois Morris, while employed as a twenty one dealer at Harolds Club, met Harold Smith (Senior), and they were soon married. Diane was adopted by Harold. She had a close relationship with her adoptive father, whom she called Daddy. Diane remembers growing up in the Smith family this way:

After she married my father, my mother never worked again at Harolds Club. She would go there three or four times a week, but it was usually when a celebrity or entertainer was in town, or there was a dinner or that kind of thing. Her clothes were designed and made especially for her Daddy wanted her to look perfect at all times.

One of my best early memories is of being with Daddy on his horse, riding up Moana Lane between his arms, sitting on the front of his saddle. When I got older and began riding my own horse every day, I had to be on time and showered before I came to the dinner table. If I wasn't, he'd get upset because I smelled like a horse. [laughter]

Daddy would always be home for dinner, and he was very punctual. His rule was that he would wait ten minutes for anyone, but no more. (He made an exception for my mother, who was often late.) After the restaurant opened at Harolds Club, we'd eat dinner there every night, because my mother didn't cook. Daddy was very proud of the restaurant, which he called the Rose Room.

There were older children in our house, Daddy's by his first marriage, and since they could already read, I started reading when I was four years old. My mother didn't think kindergarten would do me much good, and I'm sure she was right, so I didn't go. When I started school at the age of six, it was the first time I was among people from different backgrounds. I began to realize that not everybody lived like I did. [laughter] People would whisper, "That's Harold Smith's daughter."

When I became a teenager, it got worse. Because I had a horse, or because I had a car, or because I



Lois and Harold, c. 1950. *"Daddy wanted her to look perfect at all times."*

had nice clothes . . . that makes you bad? People would say, "Must be nice." I finally got to where I'd turn around and say, "It is!" [laughter]

We would go up to Lake Tahoe ev ery summer when I was a kid, rent a cabin on the beach, and stay up there for a month. We had a boat called *Harolds Club*. It was a Chris Craft inboard, with a wooden hull, a very beautiful boat with a little American flag flying on the back. My dad would come up on the week ends. A good friend of his was Bernie Einstoss, who owned the Bal Tabarin, a gambling casino on the north shore. The Einstosses would stay up there, and we'd all get together. Patty, their daughter, was a friend of mine.

Sometimes at Christmas the whole family would get together at grandfather's, but Thanksgivings when I was a child, we traditionally went to Uncle Raymond's. Uncle Raymond and Aunt Olga and their children, Ray Jr. and Virginia and Joyce, lived up on Canyon Drive in Reno. I would see Uncle Ray at the gun club (he was a good shooter), and once in awhile I'd see him in the of fices at Harolds Club. He played chess and bridge, and he flew an airplane. Uncle Ray was a very nice man, soft spo ken, and he was more like his mother than his father. He pretty much kept to himself, because his interests were else where, and he didn't have anything to do with running the club. He was the trea surer, so he signed the checks, but he didn't have any input in the running of the club.

We would go to my grandfather's house on occasion, and that was always fun. They had a wonderful back yard with all kinds of big toys, and they had a cro quet setup. We'd play croquet, and we'd play on their swing sets and jungle gyms and all that stuff. You know, the grass is always greener I had a barn and horses, but for some reason I thought their jungle gym was more intriguing than my horses. [laughter] It was always nice over there. Iola, my grandfather's wife, was a very good hostess, very gracious, very nice. I was the youngest and the smallest, and Grandfather was kind of deaf by then, so he didn't hear me too well. We didn't have a whole lot of con tact.

As a kid, I loved Elvis Presley. I was about nine years old when Elvis started out, and I thought he was wonderful. In stead of making fun of me like everyone else's father, whenever Elvis would come

on the radio, Daddy'd turn it up and really listen to "Love Me Tender" and all of that. [laughter] After a few years, when Elvis became a phenomenon, he said, "You were right."

My father had studied to be a concert violinist, but he had to stop and go to work when he was young. He always loved classical music, and it was played all the time in the house. One of his dreams was to bring concert artists to Reno, so he sponsored concerts at Manogue High School. They were held in the gym, but it's actually quite beautiful inside. The acoustics were very good, according to him. He presented Ruggiero Ricci, Jan Peerce, Lili Pons, Isaac Stern, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf There may have been more.

These would be huge events. Daddy would be the emcee, and he was so pleased. People would fill the whole auditorium. It was pretty wonderful. That concert series was among the high points of my father's life . . . that and when he actually taught business classes at the university. He was not even a high school graduate, so he was very thrilled that he was asked to teach.

My father had been raised a devout Catholic by his mother, Dora, who was my grandfather's first wife. He went to church regularly, and I wanted to be included. My brother, David, was interested too. My father was good about not insisting: "If you want to do it, I'll take you to church on Sundays." I had to go through catechism, and as a child I had to get to all my lessons on my own ballet or ballroom dancing or catechism or anything else, I had to get myself there. At that time we lived in the country, so I rode my bicycle to where I was going, or I took a bus.

Daddy went to church once a week or more, and he gave generously to Catholic causes. He donated so much money to St. Mary's hospital! I think all of the proceeds from the Manogue concerts went either to St. Mary's or to Manogue High School, or both. He was an incredibly generous man. One time when I was older, he decided to go out and buy Cadillacs, and he bought me one, he bought each of my sisters one . . . he bought any number of people a brand new Cadillac just because he wanted to. But he didn't necessarily give birthday and Christmas presents as a matter of fact, he *rarely* gave birthday and Christmas presents, but he'd go out some day and buy you a new car or a new gold watch or something. He never bought any gift that wasn't wonderful, but he was a spontaneous gift giver. And he was not good at accepting gifts. He would say, "Don't buy me anything. I have absolutely everything." He was right.

My father always called television an "idiot box," and we did not have one until the year he bought one so he could watch the World Series at home. He left it in the house when the Series was over, and that's how we got our first TV. I was eleven years old by then.

Daddy loved baseball, and he was a huge fan of the New York Yankees. He even had a Yankee uniform. Mert and Lou Wertheimer, who owned the Riverside, would bet with Daddy against whomever the Yankees were playing; and one year, when the Yankees won the World Series, Daddy put on his uniform, and he had a baseball bat, and he marched down the street with a little band and into the Riverside to collect his bet with lots of noise and carrying on.

Daddy was a good athlete he had been an amateur boxer. He always told me if I had been born a boy, I would have

made a good welterweight. I used to shadowbox getting ready for Laura June to come visit she was older than me, and she wasn't always real nice, so I used to get ready for her. [laughter]

Harolds Club had a gun club on Pyra mid Way, run by Val and Don Ohnstad. My dad would shoot out there. I went out with him all the time; we all did. I tried shooting, and I didn't enjoy it, but I did love being out there, because . . . well, I could do anything I wanted, and every one was real nice to me. You could just go out there and sit, or you could play or run around on the desert. You could go out and look for clay pigeons that weren't broken, and pick them up and take them home. It was a great place

Harolds had the annual employee party out there. It lasted for twenty four hours, so everyone on every shift in the club could go. There were dancing and live music and food and booze and ev erything you could want for a party. When I got older, I'd go to these parties.

We had a strange home life . . . very strange. When I was little, I only saw my parents about once a day. They didn't raise us; that was taken care of by live in help. We had the same couple until I was seven, then we went through many couples, and I kind of got to know my mother. She was an unusual person, very volatile.

My father usually brought happiness home, but when I was eleven, he had a nervous breakdown. My mother followed him, so they were both in the hospital at once. That was a difficult time for me, to say the least! I was the only child still at home, and it was hard.

While my mother and father were hospitalized, I lived with Dr. and Mrs. Louis Lombardi. They were friends of my par ents, and Dr. Lombardi was my mother's doctor. I stayed with them for awhile, probably six weeks, and then my parents came home. After that, my father went back to being pretty much the way he had been, but my mother was never the same.

My father was diagnosed as manic depressive; now, they would say he was bipolar . . . as well as being an alcoholic. He had his monsters! He had a strong personality, and when he was emotion ally up, it didn't matter whether you worked for him or not, everyone stopped what they were doing and listened. It was amazing. Of course, when he got down, then everyone got very quiet and de pressed too. He knew that, and when he wasn't feeling well, he'd go away and not inflict his mood on other people. I realize now that was a very kind thing to do, but, at the time, I didn't understand it.

No doubt, the pressures of operating a twenty four hour a day, seven day a week business took their toll on him. At the reception after my father's death, my Uncle George Smith said the most intelli gent and one of the kindest things about my father. George said, "He was so amazing. He accomplished so much. He did so many wonderful things. Think what he could have done if he hadn't had that affliction." (I think he meant the al coholism.)

Daddy really was amazing in all that he accomplished. He was like many people who have mental problems or even addictive problems they are of ten a little smarter than the rest of us, but it's hard for people to understand what they're saying. Maybe that's why he and I were so close I was the one person who didn't think he was goofy. Everything he said made sense to me, so he could always talk to me, and he did. He would tell me all kinds of things that many adults

and the rest of his family thought were just goofy, but I didn't think so

And Daddy was always striving to please his father. As it is with most men, that was an impossible task. Women get to a point where they say, "Oh, they're just human." Men seem always to want to please their fathers, and I think Daddy was disappointed that he couldn't seem to please Pappy in a lot of things. They were just so totally different absolutely different.

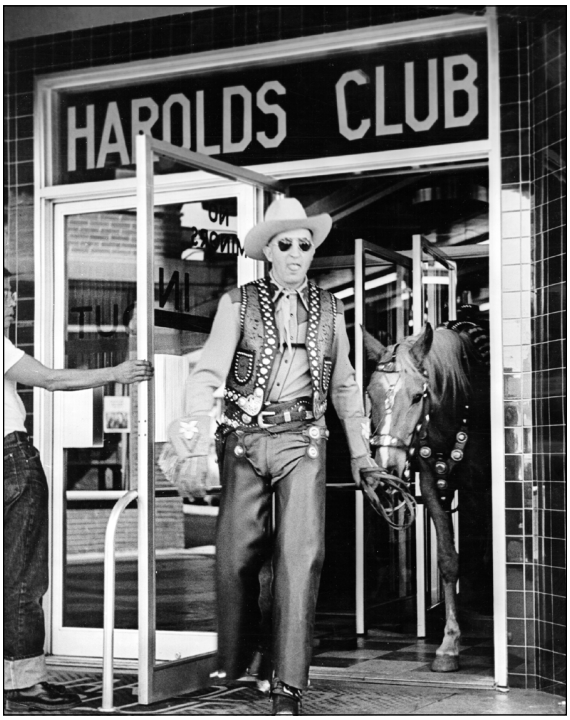
My father, Harold Smith Sr., should get the recognition he deserves for his part in making Harolds Club what it was. I've been upset about this for years when ever Harolds Club is mentioned, it is al ways about Pappy. You know, the club was named Harolds Club; it wasn't named Raymond's Club!

It wasn't like Daddy was Raymond I.'s son, and he just did what Raymond I. told him to do. Many people don't realize that my father and his brother, Raymond A., opened the club without my grand father. Daddy started it and got it rolling, and then everybody else came in. It was my father's club, and he was the one who came up with all the ideas. Granted, my grandfather was the one who made it work, because he was organized, he was a wonderful manager, and Daddy probably wasn't; but it was Daddy's in novative ideas and his flamboyancy and his risk taking and his gambling that made Harolds Club what it was.

I think one reason Daddy didn't get credit is that he didn't sell himself. He gave credit to his father for the club's successes. He always said, "My father did it all," when in actuality, Daddy did much of it. Another reason Daddy didn't get recognition is that he was an alcoholic, whereas my grandfather was very clean cut: he didn't smoke, he didn't drink, he didn't even eat processed food. I mean, the man was an icon! He had a lot of wonderful attributes and was much easier to idealize than someone who rides his horse through a club or who marches down the street in a Yankees baseball uniform. You could look at Raymond I. "Pappy" Smith and say here is someone to look up to. Look at Harold Smith Sr. doing all these crazy things, and you think . . . well, maybe you don't want your children to emulate him.

As far as gambling knowledge, Daddy knew much more than Pappy about how to deal games and how to operate a casino. My father was a gam bler, and no one in our family knew how to gamble or how to operate games as well as he did. That's what Daddy did, and he loved it. That's probably why he was so good at it. To him, it was fun; even losing was fun. Just being in the game was fun. He love, love, loved to gamble!

Daddy always deferred to his father, even when he didn't think something



Harold Sr. leading "Bobby Sox" out of Harolds Club, c. 1960.

was a good idea. It was that old New England respect for your father thing. He would say, "If Daddy doesn't agree, then it's not going to happen." Because of that, I can see how people might think that Pappy had all the ideas, but he didn't he just said yes or no. Daddy knew how to present his ideas in such a way that they would go most of the time, but not always. When my father wanted to open a casino on Lake Tahoe's south shore, my grandfather said no. Pappy didn't think it would work. A year later Bill Harrah opened *his* casino on the south shore

Daddy came up with a lot of innova tions. Many of the things he and his fam ily did with Harolds Club influenced the gaming industry throughout Nevada . . . perhaps even extending to businesses everywhere. They were the first to hire women to be dealers, beginning back in the 1930s, long before women's lib. And Daddy's idea to include where em ployees were from on their name badges spread throughout the gaming and hos pitality industries world wide.

You never knew when Daddy was going to be in the club. At home he would get up at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morn ing and go down to the club, whereas Pappy was there from around 8:00 to 5:00 every single day, and during that time everyone knew he was going to be there. If they needed to see him, that's when they could see him, but Daddy was sometimes there, sometimes not.

My father was very punctual, and he always did what he said he would do. If he had appointments, and a meeting ran over, he wouldn't linger. He'd say, "I have an appointment. Goodbye." A lot of people think they have to hang around and talk and be sociable, but he always said, "There's a time to be some where and a time to leave. It's time to leave. Goodbye."

Maintaining friendships was tough for him. He would go to dinner and what not at people's houses, but because of the club, he'd only have a couple of hours, and then he'd go back to work. He worked all the time. He had an apart ment at the club, and his life was there, really. Daddy went to the Holy Land one year, and he was supposed to be gone for six weeks, and he was gone about eight or ten days. That's all he could stand to be away.

My father said to me on many occa sions, "I'm not smarter than you; I'm just more experienced. Pay attention to what I'm saying!" He always let me know that I could do anything I wanted to do, with no problem. He had no bias against me as a woman, and I didn't realize that other men in the workforce did. It was a shock to me when I went out in the world to earn a living and learned that every one wasn't like him.

Daddy used to say I could drive any thing. He bought a couple of Porsches one year, and he asked if I wanted to drive one.

I said, "Sure."

My sister said, "I want to drive it."

He said, "No, no, no. Diane can drive anything, but you don't need to." Which wasn't very nice, but it wasn't meant to be cruel. He always let me think that I was totally accomplished.

Daddy built my confidence, and he always said I was not like a lot of women behavior that was attributed to women, like being cunning or being clever or flirting or using feminine wiles, he thought I didn't do any of that, and I don't. He told me I was smart and hon est and could do anything I wanted to do. While Daddy built up my confidence

and supported my interests, he didn't treat others in the family that way. My mother complained about that, and other people in the family complained that he put them down. I don't know . . . my experience was totally different.

I was frightened when I went to tell Daddy I was going to divorce my first husband. I really didn't want to get di vorced, and I was very sad. He put his arm around me, and he just patted me on the shoulder and said, "That's OK, honey. I understand. He's cheap, and he's no fun!" [laughter] There was no condemnation of me at all. But he didn't give me and my two children any finan cial support after I was divorced, and that was very difficult. Maybe I still won der about that, but it's OK. It's totally OK. Anyway, I never asked.

Once I was married, I was on my own, and I had to make it on my own. After the divorce, if I'd swallowed my pride and asked for something, I might have gotten it, but I never did. As it turned out, he was absolutely right: I discovered that I could take care of my children and myself without help. So I did.

At the end, I was the only one in the family that was in Daddy's will. (He had one other heir, but I won't mention her name, because I haven't asked her if I could.) I don't know what that means, but I liked it. [laughter] I mean, I didn't like it that the others weren't, but I liked it that I was. It was some kind of recogni tion or acknowledgment, I think. Of course, Daddy hadn't given me anything before, and I think that was part of it. Also, Laura June, Harold Jr., and Joan . . . their mother was very wealthy, and she took good care of them when she died. They already had anything they could ever want, and I didn't.



Joan, Laura June, and Harold Jr. (Ray), 1943.

I think Daddy tried to help Junior ev ery way he could, but there was no way Junior could live up to expectations Harold Jr. was nothing like Daddy, any more than Daddy was anything like his father. It's too bad when people try to be like a parent, when they're nothing like that parent I couldn't have been like my mother; I'm more like my father, and when my mother was mad at me, she used to say, "You act just like your father!"

Harold Jr. was originally named Raymond I. Smith. Junior was thirteen years older than me, and he was "Raymond" to me for the remaining

years before he turned twenty one and changed his name. As a minor, he couldn't change it without parental con sent, and Daddy wouldn't do it, because Raymond was named after Grandfather. We all assumed that Junior changed his name to be more like his father. He was much closer to his father than he was to his grandfather at that time, but I under stand that as the years went by, he be came closer to Grandfather.

Daddy told me he couldn't drink, but he loved to drink. It was like gambling. One time he took a vow not to take a drink till I was sixteen or eighteen, some thing like that, and he didn't drink for six or eight years at least, he never drank at home. The whole time I was growing up, he never was drunk at home, never. If he indeed drank at all when I was a child, I don't know it.

He would take these vows, and he'd stick by them, and when they were over, he'd go out and get drunk! [laughter] And he would drink so much! You and I would die. I mean, most people couldn't consume that much alcohol, truly.

He'd go out, and he'd drink, and he'd drink, and he'd drink, and he'd drink for days or weeks even. Then he'd get so sick he'd go to the hospital and get cured, and he'd stay sober for however long he decided he was going to stay sober. But he always let everybody know when he was going to be drinking. He never, ever hid. He'd say, "I'm drinking." That's it.

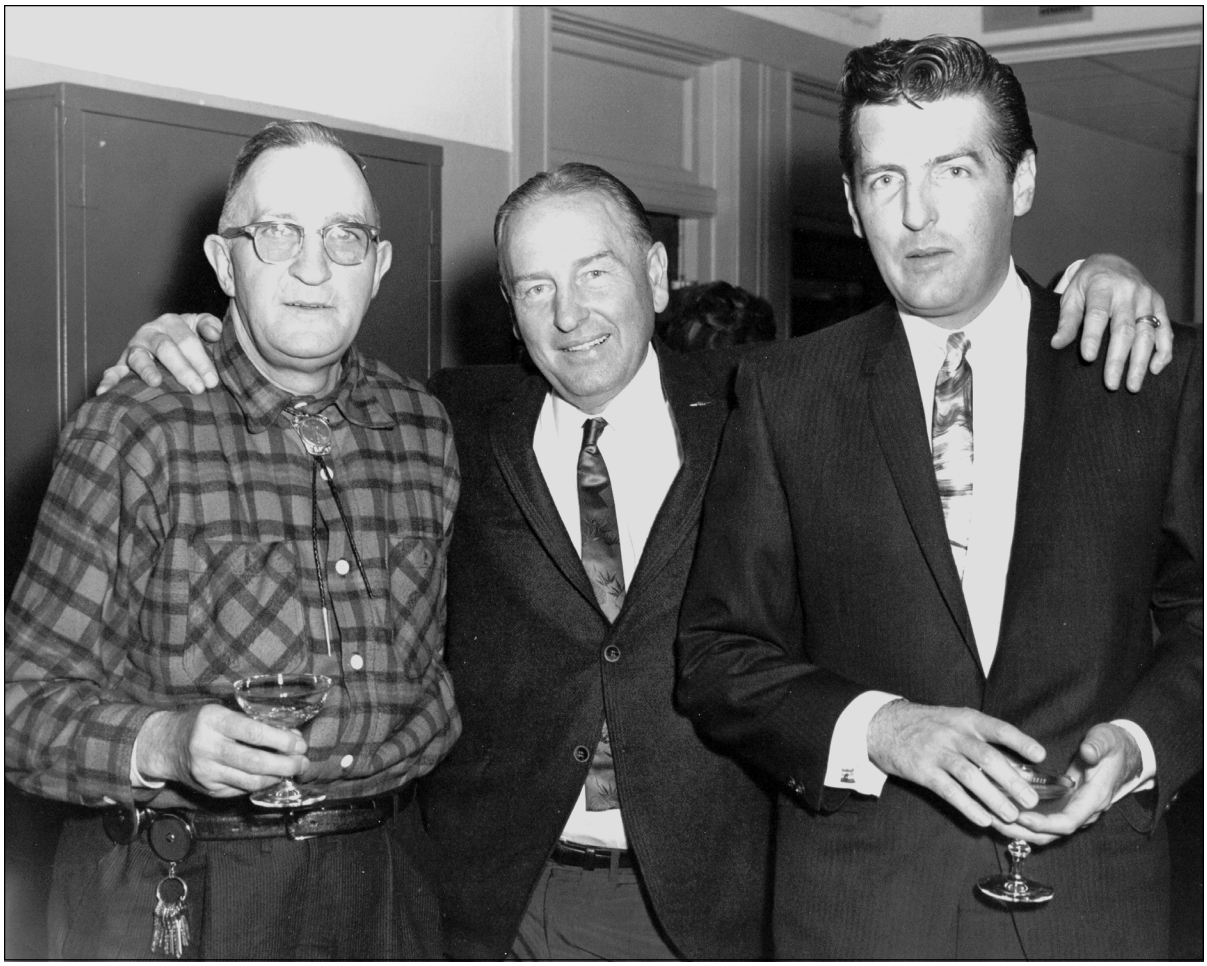
Alcoholics go through a phase where they have a real good time, and then they get mean, and then they get de pressed, and then they get sick . . . and I don't know the order, but you could see it in him. One day you'd see him, and he'd be having a grand time; the next time you'd see him, he'd be mean; and the next time you'd see him, he'd be sick.

Following Grandfather's death in 1967, Daddy started drinking. He missed his father so much, and as strange as it seems, I don't think he wanted to run the club without his father. They'd been part ners for so many years that I think it wasn't fun without his nemesis. Without Grand father around, Daddy got his own way all the time Harold Jr. was no challenge, and Raymond wasn't involved at all, and it just wasn't any fun. Who was he going to talk to? Who was he going to argue with? [laughter] Nobody. And we tend to go with the familiar, whether it's good or not.

Of course, my mother always argued with Daddy, but she was so hot tem pered that that wasn't good. It was a stormy marriage. They were both vola tile, but they could have so much fun! They were either screaming at each other or laughing, and that's the way they liked it.

In 1967, when Grandfather died, my mother was dying too. She was in the hospital having surgery during the fu neral. She had started out with breast cancer and then had another If breast cancer metastasizes, then they start taking other parts of you away. She finally ended up in Stanford being taken apart. And even though they had been divorced for a number of years, Daddy paid all her bills and made sure she had a dozen roses every other day. When Grandfather died, she was going through this, and Daddy was affected by that as well. Of course, he was thinking about the club, too. There was an awful lot on his plate.

My mother lived almost three years longer, dying in 1970. She had about five



"Following Grandfather's death, Daddy started drinking" Harold, Raymond A., and Harold Jr. (left to right).

surgeries, and not any of them were to gether. She'd get a little better, and then something else would come up from the stomach to the liver, to the lungs, and on and on. They had divorced in 1961 or 1962 Daddy was writing his book, *I Want to Quit Winners*, and I think my mother wanted her own identity. She was an art ist, and she went back to school, and she started hanging around with the art group. Well, the art group is different! Their paths just went different ways. It was very sad. At the end, when she died, I think they still loved each other, and he was there.

When they divorced, I stayed in the house at Lakeside and Moana with my mother. I thought I'd get to live with my father, but he wouldn't do that to her it would have upset her too much. When she died, the house went to me and my brother David in partnership with my fa ther, and then he bought us out.

When Daddy told me Harolds Club was for sale, he said he was trying to work



"I think my mother wanted her own identity." Lois Smith (left) and daughter Diane, c. 1960.

a deal with Howard Hughes. He was going to sell it for what he considered a good price, and he was excited because he'd brought Howard Hughes to Reno. Daddy *did* get a lot of money for the club, and he spent a lot of it. [laughter]

I was only twenty five when the club was sold, and I had never worked there. I think my father had hoped I'd be in it on the management side sometime, and I had thought it would be my life, too. I was very sad when the club was sold, but it was what Daddy wanted to do, and it was his club. Years ago a lawyer told me if someone wants to leave all their money to a cat, that's their prerogative, because it's their money, and they can do what they want with it. All these people who scream and yell about those things, they don't have that right.

Daddy was pretty excited in a manic, happy kind of way when the club sold. He was pretty proud of himself, actually. (It was only afterwards that he realized he probably shouldn't have done it.) After the sale, he went out and bought a ranch and a whole bunch of horses He tried living at our old house, and he couldn't, because he thought my mother's ghost was there. I think he was right. Then he met another woman she drank as much as he did, and they were both drunk, and they got married. That's all I'm going to say. It wasn't a happy marriage, and it only lasted about a year.

When Elvis made his comeback, and he was still slim and wonderful, he played the International in Vegas. Daddy took me and my husband and Phelan Sampson, who was his bodyguard, to Las Vegas, and he got a suite for us at the International, and we saw Elvis. He was fabulous!

That night Daddy said, "When you go into a competitor's casino, you always place a courtesy bet." He went to the twenty one table and bet $500 on two hands and won, doubled, won again, then tipped and walked away. He was so tickled. He said, "Oh, paid for our trip!" [laughter]

He wasn't drinking that night at the International, but he was the only other time I ever went gambling with him. We went into Harrah's, and he went up to a high limit table, and everyone else cleared out. He was very cranky, and he was very cold didn't win a hand, didn't tip the dealer, and he walked away. It was not a good experience.

I played bridge with him once, and I didn't want to ever do that again either. It was fun, but when he played bridge,

he didn't follow anybody's rules except his own. I'm a real rules person, so it was totally impossible. He was bidding "Harold Smith Sr. conventions," and I don't know about those things. [laughter] But that was a fun night, actually.

Daddy kept on gambling right up to the end. He had a trust, and he would gamble away his allowance, then wait for the next check to arrive. Sometimes he won, but he'd be the first to tell you that you're not going to come out ahead. Daddy's autobiography was entitled, *I Want to Quit Winners*, and in a sense he did he still had some money left when he died in 1985.

2

George Smith

George R. Smith was born in Reno in 1944. George, his twin sister, Bettie, and his younger sister, Twyila, were Raymond I. (Pappy) Smith's children by his second marriage. After attending two out of state private academies, George completed his high school edu cation at Reno's Manogue High School before en rolling in the University of Nevada. His father wanted him to become a doctor, but George was determined to work in the family business. As he remembers it,

Dad usually worked all day and part of the night. After eating dinner at home, he'd nap for a couple of hours, then return to the club around 9:00 or 10:00. He'd be back home to get some sleep around 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning.

Sunday afternoons, Dad would read to me, or we'd read together; and sometimes, after dinner, we would play checkers or go out in the back yard and play croquet. There wasn't a lot of time spent doing those things, but there was certainly enough time.

Along about the fourth grade, I began to under stand that my father had a large casino and was an important person in the community. Due to concerns about security, there would be an employee from the club or a security service stationed outside our house from around 7:00 every night to 5:00 in the morning.

There was a big bar downstairs at our house, stocked with liquor for anyone that came over, but my dad was practically a teetotaler. He would have a little sherry, maybe at Thanksgiving. Otherwise, he didn't drink, and he didn't smoke. In the 1940s and 1950s the employees' Christmas parties were held in the large basement of our house, where the bar was. There was also a shuffleboard, and they would eat, drink, play, and dance down there. Then the parties got to be too large to handle in our home. They were twenty four hour events, so all shifts could attend, and eventually they moved the whole thing out to the Harolds Gun Club on Pyramid way.

At one time I was into shooting trap and pigeon shooting and everything they had out at the gun club I even competed in trap shoots once in awhile in my early twenties. Harold shot a little bit too; and



Raymond I. and his son, George, meet Metropolitan Opera soprano Lili Pons (back to camera). Photographer George Kerr is at far right.

Raymond shot skeet, but he was more of a hunter he hunted pheasant and quail and had bird dogs. Harold Jr. shot trap and live pigeons. My dad had a .22 rifle and a hand gun, and we used to go out in the mountains and shoot cans to gether.

When I was a boy, I was not allowed in Harolds Club, and my dad really never had aspirations for me to work there as an adult. He wanted me to be a doctor, thought that would be a better field, but all I'd ever wanted to do was be part of my dad's business. When I started college, Harolds Club was apparently thriving, but Dad was getting older. I felt that the family needed me to help run the club, so I took accounting courses and things like that in college so I could read the financial statements prop erly and understand the ad ministrative end of the club.

I started at Harolds on May 23, 1965, the day I turned twenty one. The very first day, they put me on the crap game. I didn't know a thing about it! My dad and my brothers liked to hire people that didn't know anything about gambling and teach them to deal. Lots of times they just took em ployees and put them on a game and had another em ployee train them, and they stayed on that game until they learned it. It was a nice training process, because you didn't have to pay tu ition to go to a dealing academy or anything like that. If you showed that you were a good employee and interested in bettering yourself, they would train you for a position.

In those days we just had two man crap crews, so they just had one person train me. It was quite exasperating for a couple of weeks before I began to un derstand how to do my job, but that's how my dad went about it. And he didn't take any part in training me the shift



George Smith, c. 1965.

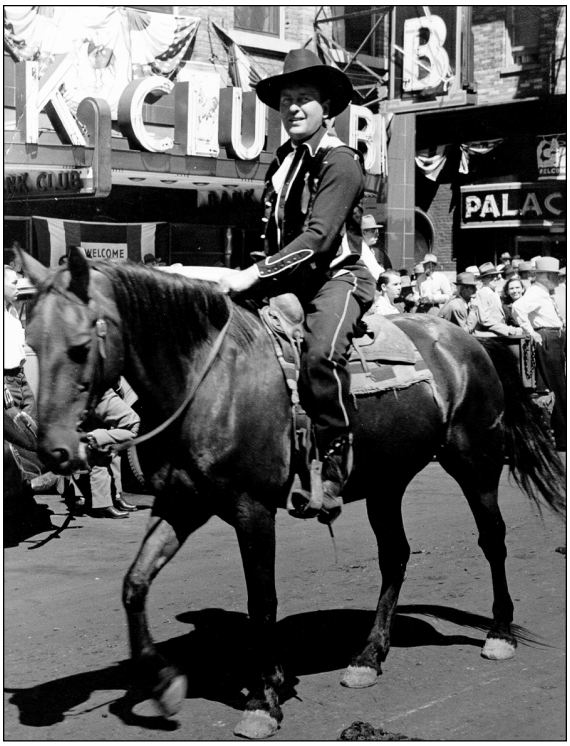
boss on the night shift was really in charge of training me.

My half brothers, Harold Sr. and Raymond A. Smith, were about thirty years older than me, and when I went into the club, they were like complete strangers. I had never had any contact with them, to speak of, and it was difficult to form a close relationship with them. Raymond was friendlier and more understanding than Harold, who was something of an authority figure.

Harold was eccentric and domineering and tended to lecture you when you were around him, trying to help you understand the business. But Raymond was more of a friend and wouldn't give a lot of advice unless asked. I never got real close to Harold, but during my lifetime I became real close with Raymond.

Raymond A. didn't spend any time to speak of in the club when I was there, and I don't blame him Harold Sr. was condescending to him, and Raymond A. wasn't really that interested in the operations of the club anyway. He had his own lifestyle, and he didn't want to be an *active* gaming operator. He was more like a minority stockholder that kept out of the club, collected his dividends or salary, and left things alone. It was probably a smart way of doing things, because if you get too many owners fighting one another, then you have nothing but a bad operation.

My nephew, Harold Smith Jr., was about eleven years older than me, and he'd been working in the club for years before I went to work there. He was involved in everything the entertainment, signing the contracts for the shows on the seventh floor, and he had a pretty good



Raymond A. Smith, 1946 Reno Rodeo parade.

knowledge of the club. I think he had been trained much like I was just had different departments train him, tell him what went on, show him how to deal, and he went on from there.

Junior worked for a while as a floor boss in the club, but I never did. In fact, I didn't work much on the floor at all. I dealt dice, a little bit of twenty one, and chuck a luck . . . no roulette. Junior felt that I should know all about the gaming end, and I felt that I needed to learn the administrative end of the club, because time was short my dad was getting old. I hadn't the time to spend five or six years dealing table games when the administrative end should be looked after.

I had an office upstairs, and I had Russ Nerase train me in food and beverage, and I had Bob Klaich go over the administrative end of the club. I became familiar with the purchasing department, accounts receivable, financing, the leases that the club had, the background to everything. The position the club was in was of great concern to me. By that time we were leasing the property back from a company we had sold it to, and how this had all come about interested me.

Our family owned the keno game at Harolds Club, but Dad didn't want to be bothered with keno. Fred Beck was one of his friends, and when the club was young, Dad gave Fred the right to run the keno. He could trust him and his wife, and when Fred passed away, the keno went to his widow, Jessie. However, there was no written contract, and the Becks didn't own anything. It was just the generosity of my dad saying, "Listen, you run the keno, and we'll get a percentage of the profits, and you'll get a percentage of the profits, and that way I won't have to be bothered with it."

When the club was sold in 1970, the keno went with it. The Becks didn't even have a lease on any part of the building, but they contended that they owned something; and rather than go through a lot of legal fighting, Howard Hughes's corporation just went ahead and paid them some money to get them out of the club.

Jessie Beck and John Brown were operating the keno for my dad when I was in the club. (John Brown is Jessie's son by a previous marriage.) They formed their own corporation, like an operating concession they had their own payroll and paid their own employees and ran the keno for dad. It was a very successful operation. They had the largest keno write in the state, and everybody kept their hands off that department, because it was running successfully with no problems. Harolds Club was given a percentage of the keno profits I believe the Beck Corporation kept 25 percent.

Dad was a very generous person. He would give concessions to people, and there were no contracts. He gave the concession at the gun club to The Sportsman, owned by Chet and Link Piazzo, to operate. They made money selling the clay targets and the equipment and shells and things. And "Pop" Southworth had the souvenir stand cigarettes, souvenirs, and stuff like that in Harolds Club. Pop was just a friend of Dad's. If Dad trusted someone, he'd just let them do something, and there were very few contracts floating around.

Dad wanted to make sure that employees weren't stealing and that they were nice to the customers. If they weren't, then it would be reported to him. We had the surveillance department upstairs, but when Dad personally wanted to check out something, he would use certain people that he trusted to investigate he had his own private detectives. He would give money to his

"detectives," and they would go down and gamble on the games and report on whether the dealers were friendly or not and if they had spotted anything else that was not right. It was an old fashioned way of doing something, but the club had started in 1935, and some of the antiquated ways of operating continued into the 1960s.

We had Pace mechanical slot machines, just like Harrah's had. Maybe a few Mills, but most were Pace. I wanted us to have some of the new electronic slot machines in the club, and I put in ninety Ballys that I got on a trial basis from Si Redd. [Si Redd was the CEO of Bally. He later owned or operated other slot machine companies, such as SIRCOMA and IGT.] The employees were so opposed to the machines that they would sabotage them. Additionally, our slot mechanics didn't know how to work on the electronic machines, and they were very expensive at that time it cost four or five hundred dollars for a mechanical machine and a couple of thousand dollars for each Bally machine.

We put all ninety machines on the second floor, but when we got to calculating, it seemed possible that the combined weight was too much for the second floor of the old building to hold. We shouldn't have put all of those machines up there without having an engineer calculate whether the floor could support them. Taking everything into account, a philosophy developed that these machines were no good for the club, and I eventually returned the ninety Ballys.

I never did put any electronic machines back in, but I thought it was a mistake not to have them, because we could have eliminated a lot of payroll not had so many slot change people and we could have modernized the club. Years later, Jack Pieper, of the Howard Hughes operation, told me that when they bought Harolds Club, the slot machines showed the biggest increase in revenue of any of the games. It was because they put new electronic machines in the club it's a proven fact that those machines saved labor and made much more money than the old mechanicals.

When borrowing the ninety slot machines from Si Redd, I had to get board approval, and the board was Raymond and Harold and my dad. When my dad passed away in 1967, my mother took his place, but she didn't actually go to the meetings I represented her on the board. Bob Klaich was also called in quite a bit, because he was the head accountant for the club, and most of the board meetings were about expenses.

At the time, Harold had 48 percent of the club, my dad had 48 percent of the club, and Raymond had 4 percent of the club. Raymond always had the deciding vote if the two others didn't agree on something, but Dad usually got his way, because he controlled the leases on the building and everything. [laughter] Dad had his own corporation within the club called Raymond I. Smith, Inc., which had the leases on the building and controlled the bars and the slots. He gave the table games to his sons they had a corporation in the club called Harolds Club, Inc., and they ran the table games. So Dad gave the keno to Fred Beck to run; he gave the table games to his sons to run; and he had the slots and the bars and the lease on the building. He split up the pie real good!

It could get to be pretty complicated and pretty confusing. If Harold was in trouble with his wife and needed to sell his portion of the club to pay her off, or Raymond had to pay off his wife, or . . .

then that corporation would be sold, and the wives would be paid off, and another corporation with different functions would be formed, and on they went.

Harold Sr. was hard to control, and Dad was always trying to see that he didn't go overboard with his drinking. Senior was a very bright man, but one who had problems with alcohol and gambling, and it had been that way from the start. There were years at a time when he didn't drink and gamble, but he would always revert back to it.

My dad picked up a *lot* of Harold Sr.'s gambling debts over the years. It's been said that Senior lost the bankroll of the club three or four times I don't know that that's true, but he was a heavy gambler and an alcoholic and probably somewhat of a manic depressive. He had gone without a drink for several years before my dad's death in 1967, but when Dad passed away, he began drinking and gambling heavily again.

Harold Sr. had more power in the club after Dad died. He had the opinion that he was running things and our side of the family should keep out of it, but he still had to get the approval of the estate, which owned part of the club, and he had to get the approval of Raymond A. and my mom and me as stockholders.

When my father passed away, 36 percent of the club went to my mom, and I got 12 percent. (My sisters, Bettie and Twyila weren't given any stock.) With a seat on the board, I was able to have more influence regarding what they were spending and what they shouldn't be spending. The late 1950s and early 1960s were the peak years of Harolds Club, but the club had already experienced a decline in profitability before Dad died, and after his death, the net profits went down about 25 percent a year. In the third year, the stability of the club and how much money it would be netting in the future began to be quite alarming. The gross was about the same, but the expenses kept going up it wasn't encouraging at all. The last full year of operation, 1969, the club made just a little over $500,000 for the year.

The principal reason the club hadn't done so well from 1964 on was because that was the year they sold the property to the Webbel Corporation, which turned around and leased it back to them for $125,000 a month. That was a lot of money in those days, so they weren't as liquid as before, and they found it difficult to expand and grow and keep up with the times.

They got some cash for the sale of the property, and then they turned around and poured it right back into operating expenses, and Senior had to pay off Dorothy, his ex wife (he owed her money from the divorce), and they paid gambling debts for Senior. Also, Dad blew a lot of money in the oil business. Dad was always investing in the oil business, and he had extensive holdings.

The sale of the property in 1964 was a factor in the decline of Harolds Club, but the club as a business was sold in 1970 because Senior was gambling. No other reason Senior was gambling and had run up huge debts that had to be paid. He had received a quarter of a million dollars from my dad's estate, and he cashed every check at Harrah's and gambled. Senior had a note at the bank that was due, and he had half a million dollars in "hold" checks in the Harolds Club cage that he had to pick up, and he was only making $100,000 a year in salary.

Jack Streeter, Harolds Club's attorney, was informed by Harold Sr. that he wanted to sell the club. We were selling just the business there wasn't any real

property involved other than slot ma chines and table games. Hilton looked into buying the club, and, I believe, of fered $4 million for it. That was way too low. Then Jack Streeter got Howard Hughes's attorneys involved, and Howard Hughes offered $11 million. Hughes bought it in 1970 for $11 million, but $1 million of that was the bankroll, so it was really sold for only $10 million. After expenses, Senior got $4 million, and my mom got $4 million dollars. Raymond A. got around $440,000. I got about a mil lion. It was all paid in cash.

I would have prevented the sale of Harolds Club if I could. The most impor tant thing to me was having the club and keeping it going, and, at the time, I thought it was a more successful opera tion than it really was. In truth, the club could only have been a success if they could have built a hotel and expanded, and they couldn't. Casinos have to keep growing and keep up with the times, or they don't do well.

3

Laura June Smith Barnes

Laura June Smith Barnes was born to Harold and Dorothy Smith in Reno in 1942. While she was still a child, her mother and father divorced and her mother was awarded a financial interest in Harolds Club. Laura June grew up in the Smith extended family, close to her father, her aunts and uncles, and her grandparents. As she remembers it,

My father, my mother, and my uncle Raymond opened Harolds Club in Reno in 1935. Prior to mov ing to Reno, they had lived in Modesto, California my grandfather lived there with them. They ran a hearts game in Modesto until the law kicked them out of town, and then they came to Reno and started Harolds Club. Later they asked Grandpa to come be the manager. When the club opened, my mother worked in it as a dealer she was the first woman dealer in the state of Nevada.

I was four years old when Mama and Daddy di vorced. Harold Jr. stayed with Daddy, but Mama took my sister and me and moved to southern California. When we moved back to Reno (I was in sixth grade at the time), Mother worked at the club sometimes, and she organized parties for the enlisted men that did survival training at Stead air base. She also did some public relations type things for the club.

After divorcing my mother, my father married a lady named Lois Morris. Their home was at the cor ner of Lakeside and Moana, a big white house up on the hill with a horse pasture around it. I went over there a lot to ride horses. (My father was married to my mom for fifteen years, and he was married to Lois for fifteen years.)

When I was a kid, Daddy would come and get me periodically from southern California, or Joan and I would come up and stay at the Lakeside house. Lois's daughter, Diane, and I were always off play ing, and I'd go over to Grandpa's occasionally to play with his kids. Grandpa liked to play croquet, and sometimes we'd play croquet. That was a big thing to do over there play croquet with Grandpa. My grandfather's children by his marriage to Iola were all younger than me we had some good times, but we didn't run around together, so to speak.



Harold and Dorothy, c. 1940.

Daddy was eccentric, but my mother and grandfather and Uncle Raymond were all very logical they kind of evened Daddy out. Grandpa was down to earth, conservative; but Daddy was a manic depressive he was a conglom erate of contradictions. You had to deal with that, and it wasn't always easy. He had highs and lows, and the highs would be outrageous. We'd have to rein him in sometimes, which he probably didn't like

Harolds Club was named for Daddy, but it was a joint effort of the four of them together not when my mom was away following the divorce, but from 1935 to 1946 and then from 1951 to 1957. They were a good combination, the four of them, but Pappy got credit in the public's mind for a lot of the things they did as a team. One was the "Harolds Club or Bust" signs that were erected all over the coun try. The signs were voted on and decided on by all four of them, and yet Pappy was the one who was credited for them. Harold deserves more recognition for his contributions to the success of the club. So does my mother; so does Raymond A. They did those things together.

Grandpa liked to double the bets, and he had a great sense of humor. At Pappy's funeral, the priest got up, and just about the first thing he said was, "Pappy's looking down on us and say ing, 'This is good for business.'" I just hit my husband and burst out crying and laughing at the same time, because the priest was right on about Grandpa. And his funeral *was* good for business.

Like Pappy, Daddy also had an in credible sense of humor, and he was the outgoing showman of the two. Daddy would take the microphone and make announcements and talk to the custom ers over the PA system at Harolds Club. See, he liked to be visible he didn't want to be the head honcho in the top office that you never saw. He liked to be part of the people, down with the people.

Daddy liked attention, he liked to make people laugh, and he would do things to make people talk about him. He had a limousine, and he filled the back of it with stuffed animals, bought himself a chauffeur's cap, and drove around town with his nose up in the air, chauffeuring this limousine full of stuffed animals. One time he bought a Rolls Royce, and he drove up to the front door of Harrah's. He got out of his Rolls and went up and kicked the tire of Harrah's Rolls Royce, turned around, and walked in the building. He did things like that for show.

Daddy drove a little toy car in one parade, and he had a little dune buggy that he drove in another. (He put my kids and my brother's kids in the back of it, and they all rode in the parade.) Once he strapped a stuffed lion on the back of one of his motorcycles, and he put on a sombrero and rode all over town with this lion on the back of his motorcycle to make people laugh, to make people talk. He liked to do that kind of thing

that was a lot of fun for him. Harolds Club might get some publicity out of it, but he didn't do it for Harolds Club; he did it for fun.

When I was twenty, I went to work in Harolds Club as a secretary in their pub lic relations office, on the third floor in the building between Commercial Row and Douglas Alley. Right across the hall from where I worked, Daddy had a bedroom, and he had his music; and when I was working, I was listening to his classical music, because he'd have his door open. Later on, when they redid the Arch Lounge, he had an apartment above it, and he literally lived there.

When I turned twenty one, I asked Daddy if I could go to work in the club, and he said yes, that I could learn how to deal. And he said, "You mess around, and I'll fire you." In other words, toe the mark and do a good job. He wasn't go ing to play favorites.

Some employees may have been afraid of me because of who I was. I used to deal very fast, and one time the guy in the catwalk above me was watching and couldn't keep up with me. His super visor told him, "Go downstairs and tell her to slow down," and he said, "I'm not tell ing her." The story got back to me that they were afraid to tell me to slow down, because I was somebody's daughter.

Another time, a dealer girlfriend of mine told me that someone had asked, "Isn't it nice to be friends with Laura June?" The implication was that she dealt on better tables because she was my friend. But I didn't feel resentment, and I wasn't treated differently than anybody else I mean, I had to work the same hours.

To learn to deal twenty one, I went to the twenty five cent table and watched somebody deal. They ex plained what they were doing as they were doing it, and then they handed me the deck of cards and watched me. I've trained a few dealers myself, and I've seen others trained that way.

You learned by dealing on the twenty five cent table. (On weekends, the table was a dollar. I mean, "Oh, what if I make a mistake? It's a dollar!") You got seven retirees playing there five days a week, and they'd teach you how to deal that game. They were great, be cause they'd tell you what to do, so you actually learned both from your teacher and from retirees who were regulars. You got to know their first names, their kids' names we were telling jokes; I was sing ing songs to them. I had a great old time, and they used to think I was hysterical.

One day I had all women on the table, and the women started telling dirty jokes. They were *hysterical*. They sat there all prim and proper with their little white gloves and their Sunday hats, and they started telling dirty stories, and they were hysterical!

I was laughing so hard I was forget ting to deal the cards. Then this guy walks up, and I said, "You can't sit down here unless you can crochet."

He says, "I know how to crochet."

"OK, then, sit down!" So the dirty sto ries stopped. [laughter]

Customers would sit there my entire shift sometimes. In fact, there would be times when I'd go home, come back the next day, and a guy would say, "I've been here since yesterday." He'd sat there all night playing a quarter a hand, and at that minimum bet, it would take a long time to lose your money. They'd sit and tell stories and have their coffee, and everybody knew everybody. It was like an afternoon tea party; it was a so cial club. It wasn't trying to win or lose, it was just enjoying company. That was part of the uniqueness of Harolds Club. In most other clubs, dealers had to get

out so many hands an hour, and they couldn't talk to the customers.

When I moved up to dealing on a dollar table, the retired people on the quarter table didn't follow, but I had many other customers that would come sit and visit and play on my table. I started dealing in Harolds Club in 1963, and a month after the club was sold in 1970, I left. (I dealt eleven more years in other clubs.)

Somebody once asked Daddy in front of me if I was a good dealer. He said, "I've been watching her. She handles that deck like a pro." I think he expected more from me than from other dealers, but he wanted all the dealers to pay attention to their tables. He would go around and find a dealer not paying attention to her table, and when she turned away, he would take her deck and put it in his pocket and walk around and see how long it took her to discover that her deck wasn't there.

One time I was standing on a dead twenty one table in the Roaring Camp Room, and Daddy comes through and sees me. He has on a sports jacket with huge pockets . . . *bulging* pockets, be cause he had stuff in them. He takes the jacket off, and he hangs it up on an in visible hook and walks away. Of course, it hits the floor. He goes back, picks it up, hangs it up on the hook again, and turns around and walks away. I'm standing at my dead table in hysterics. A little change girl is watching this idiot do his whole number for me, and that makes me laugh even more. I'm thinking, "This woman doesn't know that's her boss." He used to do lots of stuff like that. I loved it, and I'd play along with it, too.

In some ways, Daddy was a perfec tionist. He hated seeing anybody chew ing gum, and he didn't like people to say "yeah" instead of "yes." There was some thing about the world "yeah" that bugged him. And he hated liars. That's something that's rubbed off on me: I don't like lying.

One of Daddy's pet peeves was he didn't like women putting makeup on at a restaurant table. He felt that that should be done in the ladies room. One night Lois pulled out her compact and started putting on her lipstick, and he was ready for her. He pulled his electric razor out of his pocket and started shaving to get his point across.

When I was a child, Daddy and I were apart a lot, but as a young adult, I did things with him and had a lot of fun with him. I'd take him out for his birthday, have dinner with him a lot, and those kinds of things.

Daddy loved music, good entertain ment, and being in the limelight. He en joyed going to the Fun Room, and he used to get up on the stage and take over. He wouldn't interrupt the enter tainer, but he might come up on stage before the entertainer came on and do his spiel. He once rode his horse, Bobby Sox, into the club, took him up to the bar and fed him a Coke. He had a New York Yankee baseball uniform, and he *loved* the Yankees one time he got up on stage in his uniform, doing his thing, and that was funny. He would just get up there and start talking extemporaneously about whatever was on his mind.

My father played the violin (I'm sure he didn't play it half as well as he would have liked to), and at one time he owned a Stradivarius it was stolen when his place was broken into. He loved classi cal music, and there was a period in the late 1950s and the early 1960s when he sponsored concerts at Bishop Manogue High School. A lot of people think Harolds Club was the sponsor, but it was my dad.



"One time he got up on stage in his uniform, doing his thing" Harold on stage with the night's entertainment, seventh floor Fun Room.

He did it to bring good music to Reno and as a fund raiser for the school.

Daddy trained students to help put on the concerts. I was going to Manogue at the time, and he used guys I was in school with to greet arriving people, open car doors, help the women out, and so forth. He wanted it right, so he gave first hand instructions on how to do even the smallest thing. That was his deal; that was his baby. Ruggiero Ricci, Lily Pons, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, and Jan Peerce performed at Manogue. There's a picture of Daddy introducing me to Ruggiero Ricci in my high school an nual he was the first one to appear.

Daddy was a combination of contra dictions, and he was both a very loving man and a very stern person. He was in timidating as a father, but he was also the most loving person. You had quite a combination there! He had no problem telling you what he thought!

He could be forgiving or hard, but he was one of my biggest teachers. My sis ter Joan said the same thing: he was one of her biggest teachers. One of the things that he said many times was, "God didn't mean for it to be easy." When things got hard, that's one of the things he would say.

Gambling clubs are open seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, and a lot of the people that own them or oper ate them have to be there long hours and on holidays. That takes away from a family life. Daddy was quite the night person, but he was at the club a lot in the daytime, too.

Daddy was brought up Catholic, and he was very serious about his relationship to God and to Jesus. He was very reli gious about saying prayers regularly. When I was young, I'd go over and stay the night with Diane, and Daddy would read *The Greatest Story Ever Told* to us. That was neat. In some ways he was an absent father, but in other ways he re ally wasn't.

When I was a young girl, at Christmas time he would get a whole carload of stuffed animals, and we would drive around to neighborhoods where the chil dren weren't going to get much for Christmas. If there was a child out in the yard, he would walk up to the door and ask the parents' permission to give that child a stuffed animal. If it was OK, he'd get a stuffed animal out of the car and give it to the child for Christmas.

All my children loved Daddy, even though they were all intimidated by him at times. He could be scary, kind of over bearing. He was loving, and he was over bearing, and the kids adored him. *All* the grandkids adored him. Daddy was inter esting, and he was one of a kind.

My dad and I would go out to dinner together, just the two of us, and he would always say, "Look at the *right* side of the menu, the *right* side."

And I'd say, "I'm doing that, Daddy. I'm looking for the most expensive price." And we'd laugh. He was fun that way. Many times he said, "You're the only person who understands my sense of humor," which to me was a compliment.

When Dad would get with my kids and my sister's kids, he would be rolling with laughter, and they'd be climbing all over him, and we'd all be yelling and having a good time together. When I was going to have my first child, he called me every day to see how I was doing. He was sure it was going to be a boy, and it was a girl. He bought this baby a tricycle before it was even born.

Daddy always said that I was the apple of his eye, but I can't say I was closer to him than the other kids, because I wasn't. Actually, Harold Jr. was the clos est to him of us kids. Joan was in south ern California all the years she was hav ing children and raising her family.

My mom was my biggest teacher about logical conclusions, about sticking to rules, about . . . values. Daddy really lived his life; he really *lived* life. He en joyed it. He told us stories about some of the things that he did in Italy, and he'd bring us back presents from Italy. I have a Gucci bag from Italy and a music box that he brought back from Switzerland.

My brother, Harold Smith Jr., was named Raymond at birth after his grand father, Raymond I. Smith. When he be came an adult, he changed his name to Harold Jr. Daddy spent a lot of time grooming him, trying to teach him every thing about the business. They had a close relationship, but it was a typical father son relationship, with good and bad times, like a mother and daughter relationship.



"Daddy always said that I was the apple of his eye." Laura June, c. 1970.

When Dad and Mom split up, Harold Jr. was fourteen, and I was four. He would say that once when I was young and was mad at my sister, I told him, "Hold her down so I can kick her." All through my adult life, he would tell that story to ev erybody that would listen. Then he would laugh uproariously, and I would just sit there. He had such a loud laugh! We all did. In fact, my young uncle George once made mention of how loud I laughed, and I said, "George, you're just

jealous because you don't have the Smith laugh." [laughter]

Like my dad, Harold Jr. liked to get up on the stage. He had a lot of show man in him, too. He called himself "The Illustrious One." I got a kick out of that. When he would be preparing to do something on stage or give a speech, and he wanted to include some jokes, he would test them first on me. If I didn't laugh, he wouldn't use them he trusted my sense of humor.

Harold Jr. had some of the same characteristics as my dad he was out going and flamboyant, and I think that they both lived life to the fullest; they re ally enjoyed life, and that was a good thing. He and the famous singer, Kay Starr, were companions for quite awhile. Kay was a very loving lady to me, and she is a sweet memory in my childhood. I loved her dearly, and I cried when she left town, because I loved to be with her. She had a daughter, and I would go and stay at the motel where she was staying, and her daughter and I would play together all day long. I re member more than once standing backstage in the wings watching her entire show at Harrah's and the Riverside.

When I was thirteen years old, Kay Starr and Harold Jr. gave me a pearl ring and a little box with rhinestones on it to keep Kleenex in to put in your purse. I have them to this day, because she is so dear to me. In fact, she wanted to raise me. She wanted to take me home with her.

I used to spend some time with Jun ior when I worked at the club, and he would talk to me about things that were upsetting him. Because we were brother and sister, each could relate to how the other felt, because you both knew all the players and you both felt the same way at one time or another.

The day they dedicated the Riverwalk to my grandfather, my brother Harold and I had a really neat talk. We had some good talks as adults, but we didn't have a childhood together.

Harolds Club was sold to Howard Hughes in 1970. It may have been the best thing to do . . . I don't know. But I have regrets about it being sold, be cause I grew up with it, like a big brother in my life. It was a very big part of my life.



Left to right: Laura June, Harold Sr., Dorothy, Harold Jr., Joan.



In 1949 a giant mural was commissioned for the club's facade. When installed, it covered all of the second and third floor windows in the building. The scene depicted, an emigrant wagon train in the Sierra Nevada, was the most visible expression of the club's identification with Western themes.



Years later, when the building was torn down, it made me feel the same as when I drive down Moana and see where they've torn down my dad's house. It's like somebody ripped out a piece of my memories, my past.

Harolds Club was a very big part of my life. When my mother was working there, I would go and sit in the children's movie a lot while she was working. I spent a pretty fair amount of time there as a child. I remember looking out the second floor window and watching the rodeo parade before the mural was put up. Eslie Clifford used to babysit me she was in the payroll office. I remember that humongous bookkeeping machine where she used to sit.

Harolds was like a big family. It wasn't just a fly by night type of employment you knew everyone's families, you knew their kids. They put their kids through col lege working there, and they retired from there. The club was something my par ents built, and now it's all gone, and so are they. There will never be another casino like Harolds Club it's sad, but life goes on, and you can't hang onto the past.

I left about a month after Harolds Club was sold. I knew they didn't want any Smiths in the club they never out right said anything to me, but it was com ing to me roundabout. I was in a position where I needed to take a break from dealing at that time, anyway. So I quit.

Daddy was quite psychic. For ex ample, one night he and my sister were out to dinner, and Daddy had arthritis in his back, so he was hunched over eat ing his soup. My sister sat back, looked at him, and thought to herself, "My, Daddy, but you're eccentric!" And he put down his spoon, looked up at her, and said, "You're right, my dear, I am eccentric," and went back to eating his soup. He had heard her without her speaking. There were several incidents like that, where he'd know who was call ing when the phone rang, etc.

My father died in 1985 at the age of seventy five. He hadn't been ill long. Somebody heard him coughing one morning, and that was kind of the last thing that they heard. He had lived life hard, and the doctor said, "His heart just quit."

He and my mother have each come to me since they passed on. My father rode in the car with me up Mt. Rose High way he was sitting in the passenger seat. When my mother came to me, she showered me with the most incredible love I've never experienced on earth. The thing that was so wonderful was that she was reassuring me that *I* was OK. Not that she was OK, but that I was OK. It was a kind of love that she didn't really know how to give while on earth, and it was incredible that I was receiving it from her. I could physically *feel* her holding my right hand when she was there, but we were talking without our mouths moving. It was all mental That was an incredible experience for me.

4

Phyllis Smith

Phyllis Smith, Harold Smith Jr.'s widow, was born in Kansas in 1936. Her mother moved to Reno to get a divorce in 1941, taking Phyllis with her. She found em ployment as a dealer at Harolds Club and remained in Reno to raise her daughter. At the age of twenty one, Phyllis also became a dealer at Harolds, where she met Harold Jr. As she remembers it,

My mother dealt several years at Harolds Club, leaving when she was asked to deal chuck a luck. She told Pappy, "I'm too good a dealer to deal chuck a luck," and she took her apron off and walked out and down to the Palace and got a job. Then she didn't like the Palace, and she went back to Harolds to get her job back. Pappy said, "Emma Belle, remember until you own the place, you're not too good to do anything we ask you to do." [laughter] She got her job back.

Mom eventually left Harolds Club again to move to California with my stepfather. When he drowned in Monterey Bay in 1952, we came back to Reno so she could raise the family, and she took a job at the Ne vada Club.

In high school I worked at the Crest Theater. I didn't know who Harold Smith Jr. was then, but he would come in to watch movies while I was ushering. He had a pass, and he'd stand upstairs and laugh so loud he could be heard in the lobby. Whenever he wanted to sit down and see a movie in its entirety, he'd buy a ticket. I was in the box office selling tickets for *Gentle men Prefer Blondes* and *The Robe* on the big cinemascope screen, and he'd buy a ticket. Some one told me one day, "That's the fellow that stands up there and just *laughs*." He had a unique laugh.

When I got out of high school, I went to work at the telephone company as a long distance opera tor. By then I was married. Harold Jr. was going with Kay Starr at the time, and they used to burn the phone lines up on the graveyard and swing shifts. They'd talk for hours. You weren't supposed to listen in, but I think some operators did. I left Bell telephone because they wouldn't give me the hours I wanted, and I went to Edise's jewelry store. It came time for a raise, and I didn't get one, so on my lunch hour that day I went

to Harolds Club, got a job, and came back and gave notice. That was in 1956.

Harolds Club had the best reputation of any of the casinos, and my mother said it was the best place to work they treated their dealers really well. When I was hired, Esther Marino got me an interview with Pappy. Pappy slapped a deck of cards down and said, "Count these!" He wanted me to add them up, but I just guessed at the number, I was so nervous. He said, "Can you come to work on change on the graveyard shift for eleven dollars a day?"

That wasn't enough to live on, but I was married, and we made good tips. They had some really loyal customers that came in and played a lot of money. I got lucky I worked the dollar section, and I made good tips.

Working in the old Roaring Camp Room, I carried change for maybe three months. Roaring Camp was a beautiful room. It had the gun collection and lots of old wagons and buggies. Then there was the music room, later Room 25, where Pappy had all the old player pianos and nickelodeons. The music machines played all the time.

On graveyard it was *dead*, and one night I was standing there by myself There was a room back of the music room where the Smiths showered and took naps, because they had to be on the premises all the time to watch the games in case something came up. Harold Jr. came out and walked towards me. I'd seen him around the club, but I'd never talked to him before, and I thought, "Oh, no no customers." [laughter] But he goes, "Would you like to deal, pretty girl?" I said yes.

He called Dan Orlich, and I was learning to deal the very next day. They put me with Ethel Blake, who was an *old*, old timer. She taught me how to deal and how to protect the game and what to look for. In those days they wanted dealers to be able to protect their own game, because we didn't have pit bosses standing right behind us all the time.

I started dealing on graveyard. It was standard practice for new dealers to start on twenty five cent minimum games, and most of our customers on those tables were old retirees, passing time without risking much money. They cheated, they traded cards, they did everything, and if you didn't catch them, you didn't get off of that table. Sometimes you had to reach over and take away the cards that they were switching. They would do it right in front of you. Believe me, they did *everything*. I mean, it was a real lesson! Thank goodness, I wasn't on the quarter table very long.

Harold Jr. was always around the club, a big smile on his face. He was flirty with the girls, me included, but I was married. You'd just have to say, "Oh, I'm



"Harold Jr. was always around the club, a big smile on his face. He was flirty with the girls, me included"

married," and he would go on his way. Pappy and Harold Sr. were around the club a lot too, but Raymond A. wasn't. In fact, the first time I saw him, he came back of my table to double the customers' bets, and I pressed the alarm button. I didn't know who he was! [laughter] He did the payroll and signed our checks, but he wasn't in the club much when I was there.

After learning to deal, I ran breaks on chuck a luck and twenty one tables for a year. Then I got pregnant and quit for awhile. Shortly after I came back to work in 1961, I got a divorce, and I stayed single for eight years. Harold would ask me out, but I'd say, "No, I'm sorry, I'm dating somebody." I just didn't believe it was a good idea to date your boss. I needed my job I had three boys to support so I didn't think dating him was a very good idea.

I dealt Number 19 twenty one table for eight years. Harold said he wanted a pretty girl by the door that's what he told me. He said, "I want you to be on this table by the door." I was one of the first dealers that someone saw when they came in the door from Douglas Alley.

Dealing at Harolds was like having your own little business. If you took care of business and everything, no one bothered you we didn't have floor bosses over us. Of course, we had the "eye in the sky," observers in the catwalk, and I always assumed they were there. If we had a big game, we'd push the alarm button and alert them so floor bosses could watch the game.

One time on the quarter table, I saw Harold Sr. sitting *way* over on another table staring at me. *God*, I got so nervous! I had a full table, and I'm dealing, and the cards are flying too high. I'm smiling. I'm trying to be real friendly, right?



"Harold said he wanted a pretty girl by the door." Phyllis Smith, c. 1964.

Senior had Dan Orlich take me off the table. The quarter table was right next to the floor manager's office, and Dan dealt the quarter game while Harold Sr. yelled at me in the office. He said, "What do you think this is, a playground?"

I said no. I kept saying, "I'm sorry. I don't understand," because I *couldn't* understand what he was saying. He was all excited.

"Do you think you can go back out there and deal that game in a serious manner?"

"Oh, yes." [laughter] So I went back out to the table.

Even though we had a family atmosphere, everybody shook a little when Harold Sr. came through. He would fire girls right off the table, and the next day Pappy would hire them back. Pappy was

a sweetheart, and so was Harold Jr. Harold Sr. could turn around and be the greatest guy, too he wasn't consistent in his behavior; he was very eccentric.

Pappy had his favorites among the dealers. He had girls that would come up to his office and dance with him. When they carpeted all the offices, they laid down a wooden floor in Pappy's office so he could still dance. He had an old Victrola on his desk, and he'd play it and have girl dealers come up and dance with him just take them off the table and dance with them. He loved to have fun. When we'd have our twenty four hour Christmas parties, he was out there with sawdust on the floor, just dancing up a jig with everybody.

I left Harolds Club in December of 1970 to have a baby. I was separated from my husband and dealing at the Riverside when Harold Jr. came through in 1976. He'd just gotten back from Yugoslavia and Europe, where he'd been after he opened a casino in Dubrovnik, which failed. He came up to my table and sat down, and everybody was oohing and aahing. He'd turned gray, and he had always had coal black hair.

He sat down and played a few hands, then said, "How about a cup of coffee?"

I said, "OK, I don't drink coffee, but I'll go with you." [laughter] So we met at Harrah's after work, and from then on we were an item, you might say. We were married six months later in Reno. Harold Jr. was married six times, and I was number six. He always wanted to make an honest woman out of them. It's sweet the Smiths were all the marrying kind.

When Harold got the Lotus dealership in 1977, he said, "I don't want you working." So I quit. I still had a six year old boy and a fourteen year old at home. They got along great with Harold.

After he returned from Yugoslavia, Harold Jr. spent a lot of time with his father. They'd play bridge at the Prospectors Club. They played lots of cards. While we were still dating, I went to meet Harold in the bar after work one day, and he was sitting there with Senior. Harold introduced him to me, and he says, "Father, this is a lady, and I want you to treat her like a lady." [laughter] Like me, Harold Jr. never knew what his dad was going to do. He'd be mean one minute, and then he could be just charming.

Harold Sr.'d come over for dinner, and he would get up to go to the bathroom, and he'd just walk out the door.



Harold Jr. and Phyllis in front of the old Harolds Club lights, mid-1970s.

Forget to say goodbye or anything. He was really different.

John, my six year old son, came home for lunch one day, and I was sleeping, because I worked swing shift. I got up later, and here's Harold Sr. John had made him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and they were on the back steps eating it. [laughter]

Harold Sr. was very generous. He always had a silver dollar for the kids. He used to give his watches away, too. If somebody would admire his watch, he'd say, "Well, you like it. Here, it's yours."

Harold Jr. would tell stories about his father and Dorothy, his mom. He said during the war his mom and dad had a lot of parties for air force personnel, and during that time they had a bull dog. When the company stayed too long, they'd throw this bull dog a piece of raw bacon, and he'd drive everybody out. [laughter]

Dorothy worked hard up in the office the family worked together. She was a sharp, sharp woman, and a really great bookkeeper. I got to know her real well before her death in 1978, a couple of years after we were married she was living by herself, and she'd get lonely. After I got off work at the Riverside, we'd play Scrabble until the wee hours of the morning. Or she'd call me up and she'd say she needed some cigarettes, so I'd take her cigarettes. Or she'd want a sandwich from the Peppermill. If she couldn't get ahold of anybody, she'd call the police and say, "I think I have a burglar." They'd come, and then they'd end up staying and *talking*.

She had a beautiful home on Circle Drive, a big fourteen room home on an acre of land. Her son, Kevin Redican, Harold's half brother, was living with her, and we'd all play Scrabble together. Oh, she was great! She loved to go downtown to the piano bars and go see different entertainers that she knew from days gone by. She was only sixty five when she passed away.

Harold Jr. traveled around and played a lot of bridge in tournaments, and he played a lot of pinochle after we got married. He used to play gin at the Comstock Hotel. The fellows from the Comstock gin game went to Death Valley once a year. They all flew there, and it was all on Jack Douglass, who sponsored the trip.

Jack Douglass was a good friend of Harold's in fact, Jack gave Harold a job at the Cal Neva. No one wanted to hire Harold when he came back from Yugoslavia, because he had started drinking in Europe (it was common knowledge), but Jack Douglass gave him a chance. Warren Nelson didn't want to hire him, but Jack Douglass he was a Cal Neva partner too said, "Let's give the guy a chance."

The year after we got married, Harold quit drinking. He played golf all the time, and he couldn't hardly make it, and he realized he had to stop drinking, so he stopped. Somebody asked him why, and he said, "Because I didn't think my wife deserved to be married to a drunk." [laughter]

When Harolds Club was sold, Harold got so upset he got colitis. He had been working on plans to build a hotel, and the sale just came out of the blue. He said he couldn't believe it. Neither his father nor Iola Smith had told him it was coming.

Harold Sr. was a pretty heavy gambler, thousands and thousands a day. After Pappy died he was very unhappy and started gambling. The family had to pull him out several times. Then the bank called in his loan, and Iola and Raymond decided they just couldn't do it again he was going to ruin everything.

You couldn't stop him. One time he was trying to play craps in his own club, and they called Harold Jr. at home and had him come down to get him off the table. Harold Sr. still wouldn't leave. He just got uncontrollable after Pappy died. Only Pappy could control him, no one else. The bank called in the loan, and it had to be paid, so Harolds Club had to be sold.

Harold Sr. never let Harold Jr. have a percentage of the club. He was a tough father, hard. When Harold was fourteen, his mother and father divorced. His sis ters went with their mother, but Harold chose to stay here, and he had to go live with one of the security officers, be cause Harold Sr. couldn't take care of him. Then he went off to the San Rafael Military Academy, where he graduated from high school.

Before he even had a drivers license, Harold was driving his dad to Las Vegas in the big, black Lincoln, and driving him and some of the big gamblers around town. He did what his father said.

Harold Sr. was tough. One minute it was, "Oh, son, you know, you're the sun shine of my life," and the next minute the opposite, for no reason. Senior would not give Harold money to go to college. It hurt Harold, because his father was very giving money to everyone else he even sponsored trap shooters, like Dan Orlich. Harold would see this, and he would see him being very generous with everybody else.

Harold told me that Harold Sr. treated Dan Orlich almost like a son, but he bore no grudge towards Dan, because he knew where it came from. It was his fa ther; it wasn't Dan's fault. Harold Jr. and Dan were good friends.

Harold was very fair with everybody, and he was just excellent with my sons. John used to say when I got upset about something, "Mom, you just lose it; but Harold's cool." [laughter] They'd go out on the patio and sit, and Harold would talk to him just like he would talk to a grown person. He treated him like an adult.

When Harold Jr. was born, they named him Raymond I. Smith. When he was seventeen, his dad said, "Let's change your name, because someday you'll run Harolds Club. When Pappy's gone and when I'm gone, you'll be a Harold, and you'll run Harolds Club." It just broke Pappy's heart when Harold changed his name, but his dad wanted him to. His mother always called him Raymond; she never did call him Harold.

Harold was very close to his grandfa ther. His grandfather was more like a fa ther to him, and he stood up for him. That's probably why the dissension be tween father and son, too.

After Harolds Club was sold, I think Harold had borrowed money from his mother to get a casino started in Yugo slavia. His dad wouldn't have anything to do with the enterprise he wouldn't even go to the opening. In fact, he in tentionally opened the Siamese Room, his little bar on West First Street, the same night Harold had his opening in Yugosla via. It was like that almost to the end.

Harold operated the casino in Yugo slavia from 1971 to 1974, and he stayed in Europe until 1976, trying to get some business going. Harold had lots of prob lems in Yugoslavia, but at first, they did well. He took several dealers and floor bosses from Harolds Club with him. Some that went over with him were: Norm and Joanie Brown, Tom and Todd Davis, Danny Hill and his wife, and John Ethridge and his wife, Tanya. But they wouldn't let his people deal the games you had to teach the Yugoslavs to deal. And as soon as he taught them all to deal, they didn't

need him anymore. He was leasing the casino from the Yugoslavian government it was right next to the Playboy Club, and when he went to the bank for his money, they said, "Oh, our vice president ran off with your money." They just closed the casino and took over. They were communists they took over everything.

They said the bank president had confiscated his money, and they didn't know where it was, so they came to the casino, took the slot machines out, and just took over. Harold had to go down to the police station, because he had had to hand over his passport when he first came into the country. They put a gun to his head and said, "We need $20,000 from you if you want your passport so you can leave the country." Believe me, he got it in a hurry! The authorities also took all his cars he'd bought Audis for all the bosses.

Back in the U.S., Harold started at the Cal Neva as a dealer. People that had worked at Harolds Club would come in and say, "How's it feel to be on the other side? What's it like?" When you're born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and you lose it all, then you appreciate kindness. Then it got so all the cab drivers knew where he was. People would ask, "Where's Harold Jr.?" And they would all come to the Cal Neva, so he benefitted the Cal Neva, and he got what he called a little piece of the pie. I called it a bonus.

Harold brought a lot of good players to the Cal Neva. He ran the poker room for awhile, and then he became a pit supervisor. A short time later, he quit working. Then a friend of his from Oregon talked him into going into the insurance business, so we opened up an office here. When that didn't work out, he went back to the Cal Neva and was there about three more years before he began feeling ill and was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Harold was operated on, but the cancer metastasized. He decided to forego chemotherapy and seek treatment at an alternative medicine clinic near Frankfurt, Germany. Before leaving Reno, Harold wanted to go to the Cal Neva one more time, and as we passed by, everyone saluted. What a great tribute from his peers!

Just ten days after checking into the German clinic, Harold passed away. He was fifty nine years old. His death took much of the sunshine from my life and many who knew him.

5

Twyila Smith Whear

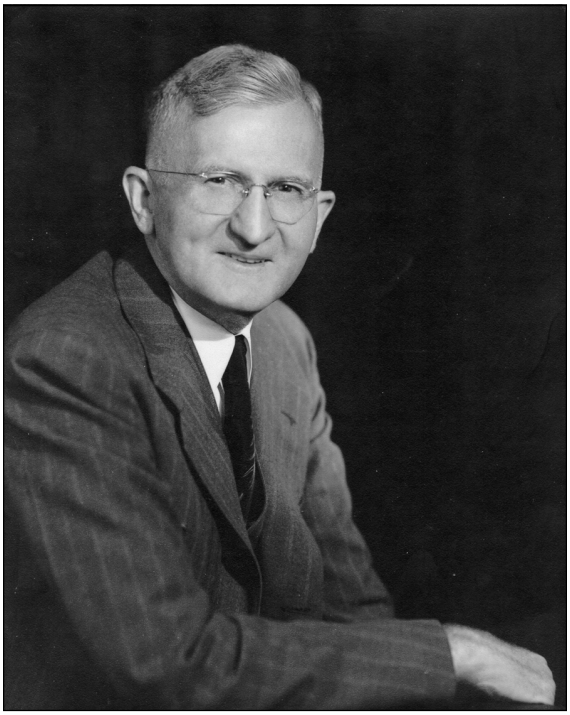
Twyila (Smith) Whear, the youngest daughter of Raymond I. and Iola Smith, was born in Reno in 1945. Twyila is a graduate of Reno High School and has a degree in nursing from the University of Nevada. Married to Bob Whear since 1966, she has three children. She and her husband make their home in Carson Valley, ust outside of Gardnerville, Nevada. This is how Twyila remembers growing up as one of Pappy Smith's daughters:

One thing that I really appreciated about Dad was his attentiveness. He was around fifty nine when I was born, and he was in his seventies when I was a teenager. Now, imagine having teenage children when you're in your seventies it's pretty phenomenal that he was able to communicate and put up with all the shenanigans of teenagers and very young children. It's even more impressive when you consider his great love of Harolds Club it was always on his mind. How does an older person, who has that much on his mind, find time for his children, who, at his age, must be a little hard to put up with? But he did.

I hardly remember a time when Dad was in town that he didn't come home to dinner. We had dinner together every night, and that was family time. He usually donated Sundays to us also. One thing we would do Sundays was sit around and read out of books that he wanted us to appreciate. His favorite was *How to Win Friends and Influence People,* by Dale Carnegie. He frequently gave copies of this book to employees, friends, and family, and he gave one to me. We would read out of it, and then we would discuss it a little. There were other books, too he was interested in the Civil War, and sometimes he'd read a bit out of one of those, and we'd discuss that. Then we'd all go play croquet! [laughter]

Dad was very good at croquet. This was his game. Mom didn't play it would be George and Bettie and Dad and me, and I was generally Dad's partner, because I was the youngest and the worst player. We would usually win.

There was always a question in people's minds about how my mother and father could get along so well, or even be married at all, because there was a



Raymond I. Smith. "*Dad was around fifty-nine when I was born, and he was in his seventies when I was a teenager.*"

twenty five year difference in their ages. It did not seem at all strange to me, be cause Dad was so young for his age. He had a *tremendous* amount of energy, and he had no trouble at all keeping up with Mom.

My mother was a very private person. The last thing she ever wanted at *any* point in her life was to be in the limelight. The difficult thing about her marriage to Dad was that he was such a public fig ure. You didn't see a lot of them together at his speaking engagements or anything like that, because she just didn't go, but they had a very good relationship. It was different, but probably every relationship is a little different. They respected and admired each other a great deal.

In her younger years Mom would go to the club and gamble, and when she would come, home her hands would be black from pulling slot machine handles. She'd give us kids a dollar or something. Her health was actually not very good for a long time. She had kind of frail health practically her whole life. (She had some neuritis and some pre diabetic problems that made it difficult for her.)That was probably one reason why the age difference between her and Dad didn't seem too much.

I think Dad respected my mother as a very intelligent woman, and, if asked, she would have given him her honest opinion about Harolds Club business. But I don't think Mom was really aware of the day to day dealings, and I think she wanted to stay away from that because she didn't want a problem between her and Dad's sons.

Anyway, Dad was of the school that felt women should be left out of business. When we were growing up, it was taken for granted that none of us girls would ever be in the club either. Part of that was because Harold Sr. and Raymond A., who were Dad's sons by another marriage, were already established in the club. I don't think my mother was in favor of any of us kids going into the club's management, but if anybody was going to, it would be my brother. That was the kind of era that we grew up in.

One thing that Dad was able to do that really helped him was to take cat naps. He could go in his completely dark room, sleep for twenty minutes, and be refreshed. Almost every night he would get up sometime between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. and go down to the club and do his usual thing of doubling the bets. He would be at the club for two or three hours, then he'd come home and go back to sleep.

Dad loved everybody at Harolds Club. As much as anybody I've ever met, he had respect for the common man

and his frailties. He knew that no one is perfect, and he would often give people a second chance. But if he gave some body a second chance, and they blew it, then, in his opinion, they were a damn fool, and he didn't want to deal with people who were damn fools.

He wanted us children to know that he wasn't perfect, either, and that he had to work all the time to improve him self. I feel that as an older father, he knew that he wasn't going to influence us much beyond our twenties. So he tried to give us as much wisdom as he could at a very young age.

He would sometimes come home and tell us that he had made a mistake with the business. He'd go over it in his mind: "Was it because I wasn't thorough enough? Was it because I trusted some body when I shouldn't have?" Then he would come to a conclusion as to why he made this mistake, and he would vow that he wasn't going to make it again. I think he was trying to show us that we should go over in our own minds what we did wrong. That's a phenomenal les son for a father to teach his children. He always said his greatest failure was that he wasn't thorough enough, and I'm sure that can be said for many of us.

Dad had a very gentle way about him. He did not have a huge temper, but if he told you that he was unhappy about something that you did, it hit home. He would say it in a very calm demeanor, but he'd let you know that he expected better. That's really all it took from him. I couldn't even imagine him ranting or raving. He wasn't the type, and he didn't need to be.

Mom was stricter than he was. Day to day, Mom knew more about what was going on with us kids, and she was keep ing us in line more than Dad. But when we needed Dad's word, he said it well.

Dad's way of speaking was very much common man. He'd sometimes not use the best English, and he'd say "ain't" and use little expressions that were very down home. But he had a real hearty laugh, he was very easy to be around, and he was quite a thinker, one who was always trying to improve him self.

He was born in 1887, in an era when men did not swear around women, and he was always polite and a very gentle man. But every once in awhile he lost his temper, and he would say a swear word. When this happened, he had a jar in his bedroom, where he would throw in a dollar. When the jar filled up, he would give the money to my mother.

He took self improvement lessons. Sometimes he'd get them on tape, and then, when he'd take his catnaps, he'd put the earphones on and listen to them while he was sleeping. He was convinced that some of the things he was hearing while he slept were soaking in.

We didn't read too much from the Bible, but he was a believer. He talked quite a bit about God and the ten com mandments, and we went to the Lutheran church when I was young. I think he was sincere about his belief in God, but when we went to church, he was a promoter as usual. He would al ways wear either Harolds Club suspend ers or his little Harolds Club tie or some thing to show that he was from Harolds Club. He also wanted to sit down front, because he wanted to put in a good size donation, hoping that if everybody saw this, maybe they'd donate a bit more, too. My mother used to get a little irri tated with him and say that church was not the place to advertise Harolds Club. But he didn't see it he just thought that anywhere you went was the place and time to advertise Harolds Club. [laugh ter]

Dad did the same thing for my high school graduation. There was a little contention between my mother and father about what he was going to wear to the ceremonies. He wanted to wear his Harolds Club suspenders and his Harolds Club tie, because there were going to be a *lot* of people there. My mother did not think this was the time and place for him to advertise Harolds Club, but he won, and that was fine with me. That was *Dad*, and whatever Dad wanted to do, I just wanted him to be there. [laughter]

Dad would say he had lived in every state in the union except Hawaii and Alaska, and he had worked in almost every state. He had lived in San Francisco for several years before I was born he had some carnival concessions at Ocean Beach. He'd developed a great love for that city, and when we went to San Francisco, he would always say, "This is the best city in the world, except, of course, for Reno."

As far as I know, Dad never left the United States. When I asked him once if we should travel to Europe, he said he couldn't understand why anybody would want to travel outside of the United States, because this was such a great country, and there was so much to see in this country.

When we were young, my mother had a real penchant for going to San Francisco for shopping and things like that. She would stay at the Sir Francis Drake, a very nice hotel near Union Square. If us kids went along, we'd have a suite. There would be a living room in the center, a kids' bedroom, and her bedroom. Mom was warm blooded, and she would keep the windows open to let in that cool San Francisco air.

Dad didn't really care about anything fancy, and he stayed at the Roosevelt Hotel, which was in the Tenderloin district. I don't think it was a very good hotel, but he probably knew it from when he was in the concessions at Ocean Beach. He had a standing room there, always ready for him. Dad liked the Roosevelt, but it was not a place where my mother would stay.

Most times when we were in San Francisco as a family, us kids and my mom would stay at the Sir Francis Drake, and Dad would go over to the Roosevelt to sleep. One reason was he didn't like to sleep with the windows open it was too cold. And my mother was concerned about our safety and didn't want to take her family to the Tenderloin district.

Dad would tell a story about when he was young and went to a fair for the first time. A lot of the concessions in those days were not run fairly, and he got cheated out of some money. He was very upset when he found out he hadn't lost fair and square. That was his first run in with gaming . . . he liked the game, but he didn't like not having a fair shake.

Whenever Dad talked about his time running concessions, he would say that gambling was fun for people if they didn't get in over their heads and if they knew they were going to get a fair shake. That's the principle he built Harolds Club on. He thought that if people came to his booth (or his casino), and they knew they weren't going to get cheated, his booth or casino would do as well or better than those that *were* cheating their customers. Dad wouldn't have stayed in the business if he had to make money by cheating people, but I don't think that was the normal attitude in 1935.

It wasn't the big time gambler that Dad wanted; he catered to the smaller gambler, the common person. And the fact that he had women dealers at Harolds Club probably got people to thinking that it was OK to go in that this

really was going to be good, clean fun; it wasn't going to be any kind of gang ster stuff.

There was a plot to kidnap my brother and sister. It seems the kidnappers had a truck that appeared to have a load of logs, but the load was hollowed out, and there was a getaway vehicle inside. My parents were tipped off, and the people were captured. After that, there was a lot of concern for our safety. Dad had cause to be concerned about his own safety too he would sometimes get threats from people that had lost money or were unhappy with him in some way just because he was a gambler. To pro tect our family's security, there was a guard posted at our house every night from dark until dawn. The guard would watch from his car, and he'd walk rounds around our house.

Even though there may have been some cause for worry, I wasn't made to feel afraid, which was good. Over the years, I walked to each school I at tended even to Reno High, which was some ways away. I was always walking. And when I was younger, I was allowed to take the bus downtown as long as my parents knew where I was going.

For a time, all of the Harolds Club Christmas parties were at our home. We had a beautiful home, and my mother was probably one of the best hostesses that anybody could ever be. She made people feel very welcome and knew everybody's name.

My mother, Iola, was born in Colusa, California, and she grew up in the Sac ramento area and in Stockton. She was living in Tahoe when she divorced her first husband, and she moved to Reno and became a dealer at Harolds Club. I don't think she was a dealer very long before my dad saw her.

My mother was one of nine children. A lot of her family worked at Harolds Club. Her sister Elsie, who everybody called Dodie, worked there. Dodie mar ried Lee Crawford, who worked in the vault. Her brother, Tommy Frias, worked there, and so did his wife Myrna. Myrna later married Phil Cirves. Mark Hutchins, her brother, worked there for awhile, and he eventually became a security guard for our house. So there was definitely fam ily around.

My father didn't talk about his other wives . . . Mom was his fifth. Most people don't know that, because he only had children by his first and last marriages. By the time he married my mother, Dad was ready to have a nice home, a sanctu ary. He really enjoyed Christmases, and he was catered to as far as what he liked to eat and that kind of thing.

Christmas time was huge at our house. We would go down to our spa cious furnished basement, and there would be everybody and their children from Mom's side of the family. Most of Dad's side were celebrating Christmas at their own homes, but sometimes they would come, too. One time Harold played Santa Claus, and that's when I discovered that there really wasn't a Santa Claus. [laughter]

Thanksgiving and Christmas were big days, and so were birthdays. They really put out a lot for us kids. They tried to make life fun for us. We had a *huge* swing set in our back yard that was as industrial as swings that they have out in parks. The neighborhood kids would come and play, and even though they had the li ability, they always let them play there as long as we were around. We would put on little circus shows for them, and we would make my father and my mother sit there and watch.



Christmas, 1949. Twyila, Raymond I., George, Iola, and Bettie (left to right).

Most of the time, our house was pretty darn busy, but Dad dealt well with hav ing kids around. He had his area where we knew to leave him alone if he was sleeping, and the house was so big that he could go to one area of the house and it would be quiet if he needed his rest.

When Harold and Raymond and their wives came over, it generally wasn't at the same time as my mother's family. Maybe that was because there would be so many of us then! When they came, it was usually a separate occasion. When Harold Sr. came, there were formal din ners in the dining room he particularly liked those formal dinners.

Hearsay had it that Harold was not very fond of my mother when she and Dad were first married. Harold was prac tically my mother's age, and he probably thought that she was after Dad for his money. But as the years went on, he gained respect for my mother, and they got along fairly well. I was happy to see that.

Harold Sr. was quite a perfectionist, so sometimes it was a little bit hard to be around him. He would say whatever he felt, and it was a little bit like walking on pins and needles when Harold was there. I was lucky, in that he liked me for some reason. He always called me a ray of sunshine, and he and I genuinely *liked* each other, but I was always a little bit afraid of him as a child, because he was quick to criticize. You could just kind of sense the disapproval Like, if I played the piano for him, and it wasn't quite right, then he would wonder why my

parents would bother with lessons, since I wasn't really going to be a pianist.

Harold was very big on the "right" word, and sometimes he would use words that you didn't know what they meant, and he'd expect you to look them up in the dictionary. He wasn't real easy to be around, but we always knew he loved us, and we loved him too. Raymond A., on the other hand, was *real* easy to be around, and, before they got divorced, there were quite a few family events with Olga and Raymond A. and their three children.

To me, as a child, Harold Sr. and Raymond A. were like uncles because of the age difference. And this was strange Harold Jr. was born before I was born, but I was his aunt, because I was his father's sister. And then I was a great aunt to his children; and I was a great aunt when I was quite young! [laughter]

It's got to be *very* difficult to work with family, no matter who they are. At the club, employees sometimes took sides between father and sons. There were Pappy's men, and then there were Harold's people. Sometimes Harold and my dad would actually give different commands. Like, Harold would tell the employees one thing without taking it up with anyone, and then my dad would counteract it and tell them something else.

Among some people, there was talk about how the club was not really run efficiently, and that there was a *lot* of skimming by a lot of people and a lot of people on the take. And that probably was all true. [laughter]

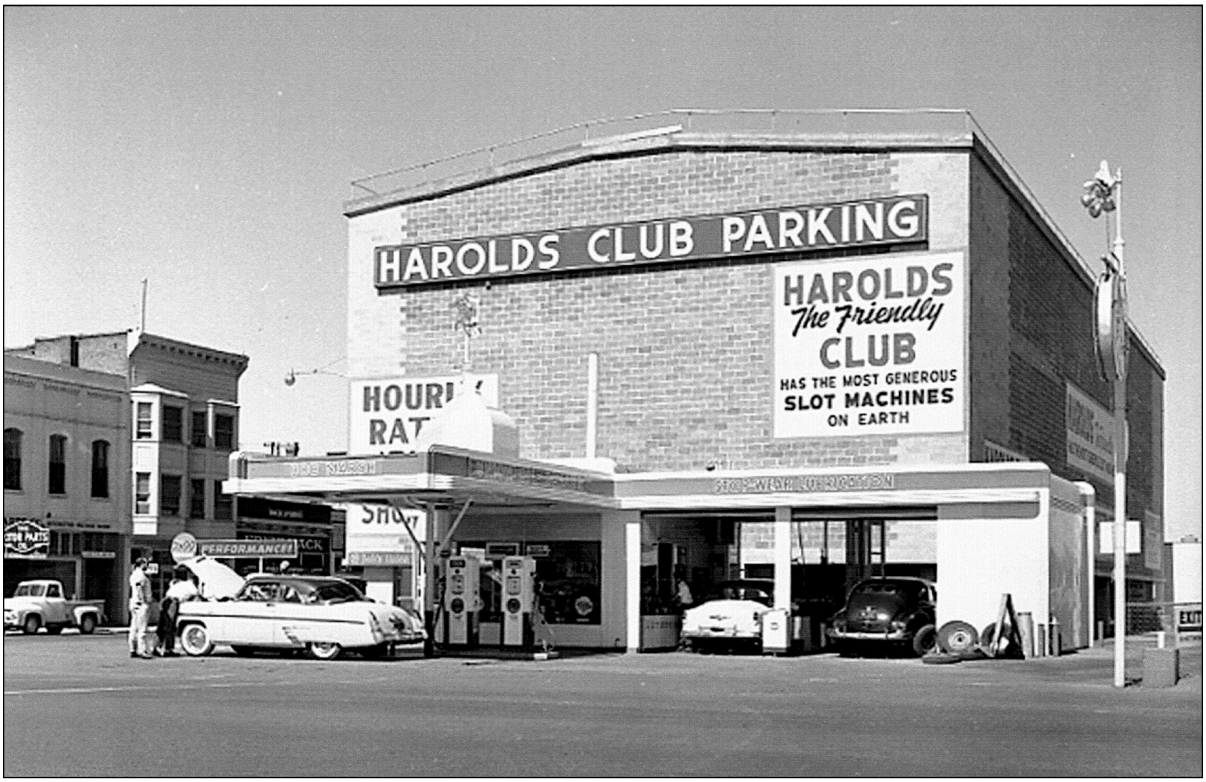
Dad drove himself everywhere, but he should have had a chauffeur. [laughter] From the time I was very young, I can remember my mother and father arguing about how bad my father's driving was. Mom actually refused to ride with him, and when we went somewhere together as a family, she would drive.

Dad didn't like the idea of driving a brand new car. Older cars were fine with him I think he was used to them and his cars would be ten years old or older. But my mother got a new Cadillac every year, and Dad liked to take her car when we went to the drive in movie because it was so big. He was hard of hearing, and he would turn up the volume on the speaker really loud. That was OK with us kids, but not with Mom, and she didn't like to go with us. She didn't like him taking her car, either, because he put so many scrapes and scratches on it. [laughter] But if she was out of town, we would go to the drive in in her car.

One time when I was about twelve, Dad and I went somewhere together, and when he tried to drive us home, the car wouldn't move. Finally he said, "Twyila, why don't you try it." So I got behind the wheel and pushed my foot on the accelerator, and the car went. Then he tried it again, and it wouldn't go. Finally he said, "Twyila, why don't you just drive it home, and I'll tell you how." So I drove the car home. That was the first time I ever drove. From then on, he'd let me drive a lot of times; that was our secret.

One summer, when I was sixteen or seventeen, I was working in the offices at Harolds Club. I would park every day in the Pigeon Hole parking garage. Members of the family and higher ups in Harolds Club didn't have to go through the regular thing at the Pigeon Hole we could just park our cars and not wait for anybody, and off we'd go. I came back from work one day, and I noticed that one of the pillars that held up the structure had a huge chunk taken out of it.

I said to one of the attendants, "What happened?"



Harolds Club's parking garage was called the Pigeon Hole. A customer's car would be driven into the garage, the driver and any passengers would exit, and then the car would be lifted on a hydraulically operated platform and placed in one of the "pigeon holes" above. Club bosses and members of the Smith family parked on the first floor in ordinary parking spaces.

He said, "Your father did that."

"Well, is he OK?"

"I don't know. He just drove off; he never stopped."

I went home, and Dad looked OK. I said, "How come you didn't stop?"

He says, "What good would it do? I had already hit it." [laughter]

It was pretty well known that in his later years (he was close to eighty), Dad was not a good driver. He would go down a lot of one way streets the wrong way and things like that, but I guess ev erybody was pretty tolerant of him.

We were kind of late getting a televi sion at our house I think I was actually in high school before we had a TV in our home. Dad didn't care so much about TV, but he loved movies he loved west erns and he loved Bugs Bunny and Donald Duck cartoons. He would laugh the hardest; he'd outlaugh any kid, he was so amused, but he would lose inter est. It was like he could only stand so much of it, and then his mind would wan der to the club. At Harolds Club, he ac tually started one of the first movie the aters for children, so that parents could gamble and their children could have a safe place to stay.

If we went to the movies with Dad, this was how it usually went: He wouldn't find out what time the movie started, so we'd walk in in the middle of one. We'd see the end of it, then we'd see the car toon, then we'd see maybe half of the other movie on the bill, and that was

enough for Dad. He'd say, "I'm going down to the club. You guys can go to the movies at Harolds Club." So we'd usually see half of two more movies, and then we'd go home. [laughter]

Dad fought asthma his whole life he really was quite affected by it when he was young. He even had a lot of misgiv ings about having children, because he didn't want them suffering with asthma. The drier climate in Reno may have been good for him; he didn't have as many asthma problems in his later years as he had before.

Because of his asthma, Dad didn't participate in any sports. He followed baseball and boxing, but what he did for himself was walking and dancing. He was very health conscious, and he was really before his time in a lot of ways. We lived a good half hour walk from Harolds Club, and he walked that many times he liked to do it for exercise. He would also dance with his secretary in the af ternoon, which sounds kind of risqué, but it wasn't. [laughter] It was really for exer cise. He would even grab me sometimes when he was at home, and we'd go down in the basement and we'd foxtrot for exercise. And he had a little bike that you'd switch on, and you'd have to keep up with it. He knew that he needed ex ercise, he liked it, and that's how he'd get it dancing, his bike, and walking. But he was not health conscious when it came to diet: he liked creamed celery and blueberry pies, and he liked his steak.

Dad was very much against smoking. In the early 1960s, easily 80 percent of the club's employees smoked, and he would insist that films from the American Cancer Society were shown where they took their breaks all about the evils of smoking and getting lung cancer. He thought it was good for the employees to learn about this, but my mother felt that it was their break, and it was their time to have a little relaxation and a smoke if they wanted to.

Mom smoked for a short time in the late forties or early fifties, but it was more for effect than anything else. I remem ber her in these long dressing gowns, holding a long cigarette holder . . . she looked so elegant. I don't know if she ever really inhaled. [laughter] I never did smoke. My sister got hooked, but not any of the rest of us.

Dad was also against drinking. Some people say he was a teetotaler, but that isn't entirely true four or five times a year he might have a little brandy. It wasn't that he was completely against drinking, but he didn't believe in overdoing it, and he felt that many people did overdo it and ruined their lives. He gave us *many* lectures on drinking.



Raymond I. pours a celebratory drink at a club event, 1944. Raymond A.'s first wife, Olga, stands behind a twenty-one table (right).

From what I understand, Dad was actually against having bars in Harolds Club. Harold Sr. pretty much convinced him that as a casino we had to offer people drinks, so he agreed to it, but I don't think it was his favorite venture.

My parents liked to play bridge. They'd have people over to the house, some of whom maybe didn't know Dad that well. He'd offer them a drink, and they'd think they were going to get a martini or something, and they'd say, "Yes, that would be nice." They would be expecting him to ask what they wanted, but he'd just go out to the kitchen and get them a large glass of water, and that would be it! [laughter]

One of Dad's biggest hobbies was reading. He was a great history buff and a great patriot, and he belonged to the All American Society, which was real close to the John Birch Society. That was during the era when there was real fear of communism, in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Dad knew a lot about the history of this country and which way it was going. He understood why labor unions were needed at one time and maybe were overdone later. Dad actually was a Democrat, but I think today he'd prob ably be a Republican, because he was always of the idea that you make your own way in life, that you don't need handouts from anybody, that you just work hard, and you can have the Ameri can dream. He was scared that our country was going to be overtaken by two things: one was communism, and the other was the lackadaisical attitude of people. He was afraid of those two things, and with good reason.

Dad explained to me that the Demo crats in Nevada were the party that was more kind toward gaming. He felt that it was good for him to be a Democrat for Harolds Club's sake. [laughter] Demo crats Grant Sawyer and Walter Baring were good friends of his, and in his eyes they did some great things for gaming and for Nevada.

Dad wanted *all* the club's employees to register and to vote. He felt it was people's patriotic duty to vote and to get involved in their community. He always had a concern that gambling had been voted in by the legislature, and it could be voted out just as easily if the elector ate wasn't vigilant. He was also fearful that Nevada would suffer greatly if gam ing got into other states.

Dad was the first gaming operator in Reno to say, "We are a legitimate busi ness in this town, and I can do a lot for this town. I appreciate Reno and Ne vada, and I'm going to show you that gaming is good for the state, good for the community, good for everybody."

Jud Allen, who ran the chamber of commerce for almost twenty five years, said that if it wasn't for Harolds Club, the chamber just would not have advanced and been able to do the community projects that it did during those years. When Mr. Allen wanted something done, he would go to Harolds Club first, and a lot of times he didn't have to go to any body else Harolds Club would just fund it. But if he did go to somebody else, he would say, "Well, Harolds Club did this . . .," and then they would contribute, too. He felt that Harolds Club got Reno moving on projects and promotions that the community needed. Gaming was behind it, whether people like it or not.

Harolds Club and my father were quite philanthropic, giving generously to improve the community. St. Mary's Hos pital was one of Harolds Club's biggest charities. Another was the Harolds Club scholarships, which were very important to my Dad, perhaps because of his back ground:

Dad's father died when he was six years old. The family had a little farm in Vermont, and it was a very hard life. His uncle had the farm next to it, and I think Dad and his older brother and his mother and his uncle tried to run the farm for a long time. Both he and his brother had asthma pretty bad, making it hard for them to run the farm. When he was in the eighth grade, around fourteen, he dropped out of school to get a job, be cause he felt he had to help support the family more.

School and education were dreams of Dad's. If he had had the opportunity when he was young, he would have ex celled at school, because he was very smart. But since he didn't get that op portunity, I feel he wanted to give it to other people, and he realized that a lot of capable young Nevadans couldn't go to college if they didn't have some help. In their time (1947 1959) the Harolds Club scholarships were the best scholarships in Nevada, and whoever got one was considered the luckiest and was very proud of that scholarship. They were just for the University of Nevada they didn't want those good kids going elsewhere; they wanted them to get their educa tion in Nevada and stay in Nevada and help the community.

Another of Dad's pet projects was widening the highway from Reno to San Francisco. Dad stayed in the back ground on the four lane highway project, and a lot of people didn't know Harolds Club was involved. The chambers of commerce in other communities over the Sierra in California didn't want to have a gambling name associated with trying to raise money for the project.

People nowadays don't understand how important that four lane highway was for Nevada and for Reno, because Reno is weather dependent and depen dent upon people not getting stuck in snow. Even today, it's kind of hard for people during a real snow storm to make it over the Sierras, so you can imagine how dangerous it was with just a two lane highway.

I was lucky enough to be present when the highway was dedicated, but Dad wasn't mentioned much. He had spent many years and hundreds of thou sands of dollars getting that highway built, but he wasn't mentioned much. That was OK with him he didn't really care about taking credit for it, but he'd be proud to this day that it was built.

All the good that Dad and Harolds Club (and I include Harold and Raymond A.) did for the community and for indi viduals was highlighted when Dad got the very first Civic Leader of the Year award, awarded by the Chamber. For the award, Jud Allen and Roy Powers got a thick book together with letters from people all over the community and all over the United States thanking my fa ther and Harolds Club for things that Harolds Club had contributed to. There were letters from day care centers, St. Mary's Hospital, the Boy Scouts, the Ne vada Air National Guard . . . all kinds of organizations, but also tons of letters from individuals that had written to thank Harolds Club for refunding their gambling losses or donating monies or even for paying somebody's funeral expenses. It just went on and on. Unfortunately, that book disappeared when Harolds Club was sold.

A few years ago a new high school was being built in Reno. A friend said, "Why don't you suggest they name it the Raymond I. Smith High School?" So I did, and there were tons of letters in support, and it seemed like the public was behind it. But when it came down to the vote, there was not one vote for Dad. They named it Galena High, and I heard through the grapevine that a high school

was *not* going to be named for a gaming figure.

The good thing that came out of that is that there was a little resurgence in recognizing Dad for some of his accomplishments. Then Jud Allen and some others on the city council became instrumental in getting the Raymond I. Smith River Walk named after my father, which is *really* a lot more appropriate anyway. And there is a nice bust of my dad there.

Dad believed in fortune tellers, and he sometimes made business or investment decisions based on what they told him. He also believed in intuition. He told me about a dream that awakened him one time, a dream that Harold was in a fire. It was the middle of the night, and Harold was not in Reno, and my father called him up, and there *was* a fire. Harold didn't know it, but my father's call actually alerted him to it. Somehow, there was mental telepathy going on there, and that's part of the reason he believed in that stuff.

Mom told me there were several people in Reno that Dad frequented as fortune tellers, and maybe one in San Francisco. She couldn't believe that he would make business decisions based on that stuff! He probably had his reasons, but whatever they were, they didn't help him when he was investing in oil and oil leasing and things like that. Many people got rich from that kind of prospecting, but he never did. He spent an *awful* lot of money, and he didn't get hardly anything out of it.

I only worked at Harolds Club during my high school years, and that was in the offices on Douglas Alley. I was not allowed to go into the gaming part of the club, because I wasn't old enough. The best thing was, I was able to have lunch with my father every day and see him a little more than I would have otherwise. He was very busy, and his health was failing a bit during those years, so it was a blessing for me to be able to see him more. He was a super father, and to lose him at the age of twenty one was tough.

After my father died in 1967, the club really needed to be sold. Harold Sr. was getting some pretty sizeable gambling debts, and my father's death affected him a great deal emotionally. The club wasn't in a good position to carry on, but I was never asked how I felt about selling it, and I don't think my brother and sister were either.

The parties that *were* involved were glad to get out of the club at the time that they did, but it was a bittersweet thing, because everybody knew, probably all of Reno knew, that it would never be the same again. It's really a tribute to the "family" quality of the club that the Harolds Club Pioneers were formed and



Twyila Whear, mid-1970s.



A group of Harolds Club Pioneers, 1991. Club president Marge Knox is front center, wearing her Harolds Club western wear outfit.

continue to meet. Their members are former employees, people that worked there when the club had such a happy, close environment, and they continue the club's tradition through their monthly meetings. I don't know of any other work ing place that had that kind of environ ment. When the club was sold, that en vironment changed, and that was sad for everybody.

People are often asked to name a famous person they most admire. I would have to say that person has always been my father, not only for what he was to me as a father, but what he was as a man. I think he epitomized the American dream and should be an example to us all. Through his ingenuity and hard work, his life exemplifies what men are able to do through tenacity and self education.

Raymond I. Smith was also a man that believed in his fellow man, no matter what that person's station in life, and he was willing to give others a fair chance. He was a great American, who was well aware of the dangers to our freedoms and kept himself active and well in formed to help preserve those freedoms.

In my opinion, he was one of our great est Nevadans.

It is not a coincidence that my father is considered the "Grandfather of Gam ing" in Nevada, a name bestowed upon him at gaming's 50th anniversary in this state. Harolds Club's innovations helped make gaming a respectable and profit able industry in this state no small feat considering the reputation that gaming had in the '30s and before.

My father's employees were truly family to him, and he easily acquired a loyalty rarely seen today. As a Nevadan, his generosity is still legend. He believed strongly that whatever was good for Reno was good for Harolds Club, and he gave back to this state a tremendous amount for advertising, charities, schol arships, roads, hospitals, the military, and to individuals. He would often remark to me that when he was gone, he wanted people to say, "There was a man!" I think he got his wish.

PART II
In Employee Memory

6

Harry Bergmann

Harry Bergmann is a native of Tonopah, Nevada. Born in 1922, he graduated from high school in Tonopah and was employed at the Ford agency garage before enlisting in the navy in 1942. By that time he was married.

Bergmann spent three years in the South Pacific; then, when he got out of the service in 1945, he attended the University of Nevada for a while before dropping out to work full time. When a succession of jobs and business partnerships around Reno didn't work out, he sought employment with the state of Nevada. He was promised a job, but the process was slow and the wait long. As he remembers it,

My wife and I attended the Church of the Good Shepherd at California and Arlington, and so did Pappy Smith. He asked me one Sunday, "What are you doing for a living?"

I said, "Nothing. I'm waiting for a job with the state."

Pappy says, "You want to learn the casino business, and I mean *learn* it? Come work for me." (You know how rough he could talk.) "You come down and see me."

Well, he asked me on three different occasions before I said, "Mr. Smith, I think I *will* come to work for you." I had been waiting for my state job for six months, and I was going through all the money we had, and I had to go to work.

Just below the Harolds Club kitchen, on the fifth or sixth floor below the slot repair department, Pappy had a little office, and that's where I went to see him. The Personnel Office was in the Ritz Building, across the alley. Pappy took me over and introduced me to Esther Marino and said, "I think you can find a job for this man."

She says, "Where do you want him to start?"

He says, "Well, we'll start him at the bottom." So she put me on as a change apron.

Homer Pope was the head of the slot department, and when he saw me on the floor, he says, "I know you."

I says, "Well, could be. I've been around a long time."

I told him about a Dairy Queen I'd managed, and he says, "That's where I've seen you!" He grabbed my change apron and threw it over in the corner, and he says, "You're not going to be a change apron. We'll make you a key man." So he sent me upstairs to the slot repair shop, where I learned the workings of the slot machines as part of my training to become a key man. Pappy's adopted son, Fred Smith, worked in the slot repair shop . . . a crippled boy.

I was up there in slot repair for about a week — they had me tearing slot machines apart and putting them back together. Then they put me down on the floor to pay off jackpots and do minor repairs, like if a coin was stuck or something. If a machine was broken so badly that a key man couldn't fix it, we'd cap it and call the slot repair, and they'd send a mechanic down. If the mechanic couldn't fix it, then it would be pulled off the floor. The club had a maintenance program — they routinely took every machine off the floor every thirty days for an overhaul, and a certain number of slots were gone over every day.

I worked as a key man for two or three weeks, and then one day Pappy came in and says, "I have another job for you. Report to the credit office." And so I went in and worked one shift. That was on a Friday — it was graveyard. I came home, and I was getting my horse ready for the Fourth of July parade when I got a telephone call, "Don't come in tonight. You're going to go work in the vault." So I only worked one shift in the credit office. My wife said I must have had B.O. [laughter]

I was transferred to the vault, and I spent a year down there. Working in the vault was a high trust job. You were supposed to have been with Harolds Club for a long time before they even considered putting you down there, but Pappy put me down there after about three weeks or a month. Going to the same Lutheran church probably had something to do with it.

At that time, the vault had three working rooms. I was in the big room — that was the "hard count" room, where the coin was counted. The center room was where Don Dixon was with all the money that had been counted. On the other side was the room where the soft count was done. The vault was covered twenty four hours a day. We only worked eight hours in the soft and hard count rooms, but the center part, where the money was kept that had already been counted, was open and staffed all the time. That's where the runners got the money that they took to the cages upstairs.

The vault was in the basement, and it had thick walls. It was built specifically as a vault — you had to go through two electric doors with bulletproof glass windows to get into it. When we arrived for work in the morning, we'd take the elevator down to the basement, then we'd push a button, and whoever was on, generally Don Dixon, would look and see who was coming down, and he'd open the door, and we'd go in and change our clothes.

We always had to change, put on a smock. The smock was to prevent us from taking money, but when I first went to work there, they didn't have the pockets sewed up on the smocks. [laughter]

Pretty soon, they sewed up the pockets. Then Dan Orlich came down one day and took this fellow off the quarter counting machine — he was counting and rolling quarters, and, from the catwalk over the counting area, he'd been seen slipping loose quarters down his boot. After that we couldn't wear boots anymore.

First thing in the morning, those of us who worked in the hard count room had to empty the machines that were scheduled to be emptied that day. We'd drop the coins and take them down to the vault on a cart and count them. I still have a hernia from pushing one of those carts off the elevator by myself, because the elevator couldn't take all the weight.

The machines were emptied on a staggered schedule. Only the dollar machines were emptied every day they were always full, overflowing. A canvas bag was attached down there that would hold a thousand silver dollars, and the coins would fall in the bag. Sometimes we'd open up the drawer, and dollars would come tumbling out because the bag had overflowed. Pappy would say, "You guys can have all the other slots you want, but I'll take the dollars."

There were seven or eight people on that hard count and drop crew. We had three carts going, two men to a cart, so there was always six on duty, and the others were on a day off. When I first started to work, it was supposed to be six days a week, but I worked seven days for four weeks straight because I needed the money. After that I'd have a certain day off during the week generally I worked weekends.

To do the hard count, we had mechanical coin counters. We poured the coins into a turntable, and they would come down a tube, and we'd have our wrappers at the bottom of the tube. When there were twenty coins, it would cut off, and then you crimped the wrapper and put the rolled coin in a can. The only coins that weren't wrapped were the dollars, and they were stacked twenty high. (Now they weigh the coins to count them; they even weigh the paper money.)

The soft count room was where the money from the table game drop boxes was counted. All the drop boxes were changed, emptied, every shift, every eight hours. Then the soft count crew came in to count the drop every morning.

Of course, there was always somebody in that center room, where all the counted money was kept. The center room had to stay open all the time to supply money to the cashier's cages when needed. Dick Bristol and his dad, Heck Bristol, worked down there . . . they had to have a runner down there all the time, too.

When money was delivered up to the cages, whether currency or coin, it was taken on one of our carts. The carts were not covered, and we would just walk up there with $25,000 in silver coins in metal cans in the cart. They had shelves in the vault, and the money was just lying there on a shelf. After we got through counting . . . like nickels, they were all packaged two hundred dollars to a sack. Then when they got too many of them, they took them to the bank.

When Pappy went missing, and it was thought that he had been kidnapped, Harold spent all his time at the casino, because he could immediately get his hands on enough money in the vault to pay any ransom. But Pappy hadn't been kidnapped! [laughter] I saw him when he came back, climbing those steps at the back of the Ritz building. My office was right up there close to those steep back steps, and I saw Pappy come climbing up those back steps, and I said, "Oh, it's good to see you, Mr. Smith."

He says, "Harry, I wasn't lost. I knew where I was all the time." [laughter]

In 1963 Harolds Club bought a million dollars worth of silver dollars, and they

were delivered in a big semi. We had Brink's men all around the roofs with machine guns watching the unloading process. The guy in the truck would grab the top of a sack of silver and swing it out to us, and we would catch it and put it in a cart. They threw this one out, and the bottom came out of the sack, and 1,000 silver dollars went rolling down Douglas Alley. But every dollar was found. *Every* dollar. After that sack burst, we handled them a little more carefully. Those sacks had been stored so long that some of them were rotten.

Several guys Harold Jr., Laverl Kimpton, and Glen Botorff went through every bag to see if they could find any Carson City dollars. In 1963 silver dollars were going out of circulation, and the scarcer they became, the faster they disappeared, because everybody was saving them. Eventually, there were no more silver dollars to be had, and that's when they went to using tokens in the dollar slots.

The day that we were unloading the million dollars, Pappy was in the vault watching us stack the money. He called me off to the side, and he says, "I changed your job. As soon as John can release you, you report to the office." (John Olham was in charge of the hard count.)

I said, "Well, OK. How do I dress? Do I go up as a janitor or what?" I didn't know.

He says, "Wear a suit."

I was assigned to Personnel, keeping all the records. I kept track of the dealers' absences and things like that. I also kept track of how much they won or lost on their tables, and I put that on their permanent records . . . not the actual amount, but their win percentage, like if they held 50 percent or 25 percent. That figure was given to me by Frank Chase, who did all the averages. I just posted them on their records, probably weekly or bi weekly.

Esther Marino wasn't happy that I was in Personnel. Esther wanted to be *the* Personnel, period, but we got to be good friends. Some days she'd ask me to take her place out in the front office. Her desk was the first thing that people saw when they came up the stairs. I'd be out there sometimes when the boys were playing bridge Pappy, Raymond A., Harold Sr., and Harold Jr. would play bridge at a table right in front of Esther's office, right in front of everybody. When you came up those steps, that's who you saw.

Although I kept the records, my main job was taking care of refunds to customers who had lost a lot of money at our tables and claimed to be suffering a hardship as a consequence. Refunding "sad story" losses was my job, but I couldn't just say, "I'm going to give you back a thousand dollars." I had a form, which the customer filled out. They would put down how much they were claiming to have lost. Then I'd have to prove or disprove it, and if I proved that they had lost, they would get a refund. Pappy was making the final decision on refunds when I started, and Pappy was very lenient. Oh, he gave back thousands *thousands*! Then Harold Jr. began doing them, and he and I worked together on it for years.

I would go to the dealers who had been on shift when the customer said he lost his money and ask them to verify his losses. It didn't take but five minutes. I'd take the man down to the casino floor and say, "You stand over there where the dealers can see you."

Then I'd go in the pit, and I'd get behind the dealer and say, "See the man over there?"

"Yes."

"Did he lose any money at your table?"



Harold Sr., Raymond I., and Harold Jr.

"Oh, yes. He lost umpteen dollars." It's amazing what the dealers could remem ber. Then I might go to the next one, and she might say, "No, that sucker took me." You had to balance it out, but most of the time the claims were true.

Only once did anybody ask for a re fund who may actually have won, but I didn't even have to take this character around to know he wouldn't get one. It was Nick Sahati, and everybody knew him remember how mean he was?

Sahati was so disliked, the dealers probably lied about his play. Each one said, "He never lost any money at my table!"

When I turned that report in, Jr. said, "Well, this man would never get an ac curate report."

I says, "That's all I can do. I can't tell you the dealers are lying." Sahati didn't get any refund. Dan Orlich wanted to give him something, but the Smiths wouldn't. They said, "He's not going to play on our money."

I would have a stack of requests for refunds every week. Catching Pappy and catching Jr. was a little hard some times, so whenever I could take them in, I would. They would ask my opinion: "What do you think of this guy? Is he ly ing to us?"

The first refund I ever did, that guy broke my heart. He had spent all his daughter's wedding money, and all this jazz. Oh, I mean, he gave me a sad story! I was so sympathetic, and I went to bat for him and got him some money, what ever it was. That night when I'm going home, I'm walking by the Palace Club, and who was at the dice table, but that character. And from then on, I was like the Internal Revenue. They had to prove themselves to me. I was hard nosed.

Pappy would make a decision right away. "OK," and the amount. Then, I'd go into Ardith Varischetti's office and get her to make out a check. (Bob Klaich signed the check.) Didn't have to worry about getting ahold of the customer if they had to wait a couple of days, they'd be on my doorstep all the time, and I'd have to tell them, "Hey, I'm not the one that's okaying this." (I wouldn't tell them who okayed it; I'd always say "the board," and they didn't know who "the board" was.)

If somebody lost a lot of money, Pappy or Junior would generally give him 10 percent of what he claimed to have lost. It was pretty much cut and dried, but there were exceptions. One time this guy came in, and he had lost a bundle he had played with money he had been entrusted to deposit in a bank. I took my report to Pappy and told him, "This man's lost money that was supposed to be put in the bank."

And Pappy says, "Fine. Give it all back to him."

I says, "Now, wait a minute. You're going to have to pay taxes on that money. As soon as it goes in that drop box, you owe taxes on it."

He says, "Nobody is going to jail be cause they gambled at Harolds Club, as long as I know about it." The man had lost ten or twenty thousand dollars. Pappy says, "You go get a cashier's check made out to that bank, so that he can't gamble it." And so I got a check from Ardith and went down and got the cashier's check.

Now, I'll tell you another good story. Pappy came in my office one day, and he brought this young man with him. He says, "Harry, I want this man to get a re fund."

I said, "All right, as long as I can prove"

He says, "No, he didn't gamble here."

"What?"

"He lost it at the Riverside." He was a car salesman, and Pappy says, "Call the dealership and tell them you're going to bring a check down for the money this man embezzled, but he is to get his job back." So, I did it. He got his job back, but he later gambled with his dealership's money again and lost again. That time he didn't come to us for help.

Pappy came in the office one day, and he says, "Harry, we're going to give back money to anyone who asks for it." He wanted to set me up in an office in the Roaring Camp so that somebody could just knock on the door and say, "Hey, I lost a thousand dollars," and I'd give them back so much money.

I says, "Oh, now, wait a minute. You're being taken advantage of now in a small way. But if you set up and give refunds to every Tom, Dick, and Harry that comes up and says they lost money, and not run a check on them" Because that's what he wanted to do not to run a check, just give them the money. He fi nally agreed with me, but he did give me the authority to buy bus tickets for people and send them home without checking on their story. I just had to call the sta tion, as we had a charge account over there.

Harolds Club was the only club that ever had a heart. None of these other clubs cared about the customers that

lost or about their employees who had suffered misfortune. When Esther Marino's daughter rolled her car and was killed, Harold Sr. or Pappy came to me and said, "Write out a 'refund' for $10,000 for Esther to help her with expenses." I tell you, I never worked in another place like that!

I had experienced Pappy's generos ity and kind heart even before going to work for him. (Of course, I never called him "Pappy" to his face. It was always "Mr. Smith.") One Easter Sunday before I got a job at Harolds, my wife and I and our kids arrived at church too late for the first service and too early for the second. Mr. Smith was there waiting for the next service.

I went over and said, "Mr. Smith, is it possible to get a Crab Louie to go from your restaurant?"

"Why?"

"Well, my mother in law loves Crab Louies. She's dying of cancer, and she's home in bed."

"What's the address?"

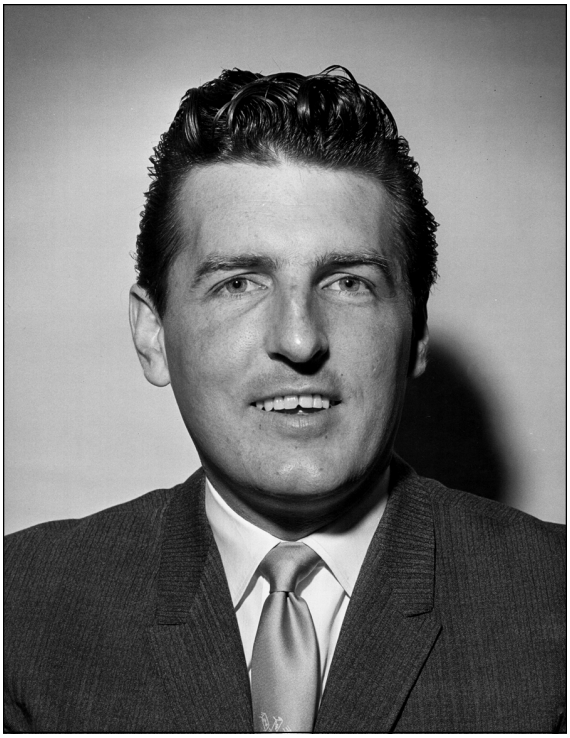
I said, "I'll pick it up."

He says, "Tell me the address."

After church, we went to see my mother in law. I said, "Mom, I think you're going to have a surprise today." I ex pected to see a cab drive up, but here comes an old station wagon. Who gets out of it but Mr. Smith with this Crab Louie. He delivered it personally, and he came in and talked to my mother in law. I said, "Mr. Smith, you also have a friend out on the porch." My father in law was dying at the same time, and we had made a bedroom on the back porch for him. So Pappy went out and talked to my father in law, who had been one of those quar ter twenty one players at Harolds Club. The next Sunday, he brought another Crab Louie and went back and talked to my father in law again. That's my fa vorite story of Mr. Smith. It brings tears to my eyes, really.

We were treated so well at Harolds Club by all of them: Raymond A., Harold Sr., Pappy, Junior. Junior was a prince, really. I know a lot of people didn't care for Junior, but if Harold had left Junior alone, he would have done a good job. Junior would try to do something, and Harold would say, "No, son." Harold had a gambling problem too, and several casinos in Reno say that Harold built them. Even the Mapes said Harold went down there and lost a lot of money when they opened. Pappy had to get security guards to go down and get him out of there, because he was losing so much money.

One day I was down in the Arch Bar with Junior, Dan Orlich, Bob Klaich, Joe Devers, and Phil Sampson. Junior wanted to talk to me alone, over by an empty



Harold Smith Jr. "*Junior was a prince, really.*"

twenty one table. He says, "You know that car you just bought me, that Pontiac Brougham?"

I said, "Yes." (I bought all the club's vehicles. That was another one of my jobs.)

He says, "Well, that's yours. I want you to have it. And pick up all the credit cards you need to operate it. You are not to have another automobile expense while you are working at Harolds Club."

So I ended up with that Brougham. I had just put a telephone in it, and I went down and took it out. Later Junior said, "You took that phone out, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"I tried to get you on the phone."

And I says, "That's why I took it out!" [laughter]

The car was registered to Harolds Club, and I didn't have to pay the insur ance or the registration . . . nothing. Jun ior says, "Even if you decide to drive it to New York on vacation, we'll pay for it." I never did, but I went to Mexico once.

During the Holidays, Pappy got even more liberal in his giving. Oh, yes, he was liberal! Harold Sr. was real kind to me too not financially or anything like that, but when I had my heart attack, he was very sympathetic. Very few got to use that crosswalk over Douglas Alley to go from one building to the other, but I had a key to it, and when they promoted me to Les Kofoed's job, I was carrying stuff across it from one office to the other. When Harold saw me, he says, "What are you doing?"

"I'm moving my office."

He says, "You put that down right now. We've got men that will do that for you. I don't want you having another heart attack."

Les Kofoed was with Harolds Club for many years. His title was Director of In dustrial Relations. Industrial relations is like



Harry Bergmann, 1972. *"When I was em-ployed at Harolds, it was like I was on a paid vacation."*

public relations, only you're dealing with the city fathers and businesses. Les was the father of Monday holidays, all the three day holiday weekends we have now. Harolds Club pushed the idea of Monday holidays. Les was called into Pappy's office and was told, "Your main job is to get Monday holiday legislation passed, no matter what it takes." So Les went all over the United States lobbying for the bill. The same with I 80, the four lane highway over Donner. Who got that through? Harolds Club. Of course, Pappy was behind these things, but Les did a lot of the work for Pappy. Les was a great man.

In 1969 Les left to become director of the Gaming Industry Association of Ne vada, and I was named to replace him as head of industrial relations. Harold Jr. was my boss, and my secretary was

Dwala Gruber. (Her name is Horton now.) When they promoted Dwala, they gave me Claire McClaine.

In my new job, I represented Harolds Club in twenty six organizations, such as Rotary Clubs, the Sertoma Clubs, the Elks Club, the Reno Rodeo board, and many more. I was active in all of them in one way or another, so I went to a lot of lun cheons, and I did a lot of traveling. Some of the organizations were national, like DATO Discover America Travel Organi zation. And the Pan Am Highway Asso ciation was international.

Pappy would tell me, "What's good for Reno is good for Harolds Club; and what's good for Harolds Club is good for Reno. And remember that you're repre senting the Smith family wherever you go. I don't care what you spend, but make sure you buy drinks for everybody if you don't buy their dinner." I had an open ended expense account, but I never abused it. I was too tight. I watched their money.

My responsibilities included dealing with the legislature and the governor I was a lobbyist, and I spent a lot of time in Carson City during legislative sessions. That's where I learned to bend my elbow. Oh, man, when those politicians go out to lunch, they have a lot of martinis! I couldn't get over how much booze went around!

Pappy was real interested in politics. He was always trying to get people to register and vote. And if he liked some body that was running, like Walter Bar ing . . . he had meetings on the seventh floor, and certain of us were invited to go up and hear Walter Baring talk.

At Christmas, one of my jobs was de livering booze to the governor and the state legislators around town. And I would deliver booze to somebody else that would then take it to the members of the gaming control board. But Pappy himself didn't drink. One night he had a whole gang of us from the church to his house for some kind of political meeting, and he says, "I want you folks to know that even though I have all those bars at Harolds Club, I don't allow hard booze in my house." He had this big bar down in the basement, and all it had was soft drinks.

Harrah's always had a strong man agement team, whereas Harolds didn't. Harolds was family, strictly family, and that can work to your disadvantage. Nobody had the final say so. (Harold and Pappy each owned 48 percent, and Raymond A. had 4 percent.) Of course, there wouldn't have been a Harolds Club in the first place if it wasn't for Pappy.

Sometime in the 1960s, Harrah's started to surpass Harolds Club as the number one casino in northern Nevada. I think it was partially Harold Sr.'s fault. A friend of mine claims that he was in a meeting with Harold Sr. and the Tomerlin brothers, who owned the Golden Hotel. They were getting ready to sign papers selling the Golden Hotel to Harolds Club when one of the brothers allegedly said to Harold, "You know, you're stealing this place, Harold."

And Harold says, "I've never stolen a thing in my life," threw the pen down, and walked out of the office. That's how close Harolds came to buying the Golden. It was going to be a Hilton Ho tel it was going to be called Harolds Hilton. Conrad Hilton had been in Reno many times talking about it with Harold.

But Pappy didn't really want to grow anymore, anyway. He thought Harolds Club would be all right where it was. Of course, he did OK the Arch Lounge ex pansion, but I believe he just thought that as long as Harold's name was up there on the club, it was always going to go.

Oh, the Smiths were something else! When they lost Harolds Club, it was a big loss to the whole town. No other casino will ever do as much for Reno as Harolds did, and nobody can say anything against any of the Smiths around me. My wife used to say that when I was em ployed by Harolds, it was like I was on a paid vacation. Not that I didn't work, but I enjoyed what I did. All of the Harolds employees did.

7

David Cable

David Cable was born in New Rochelle, New York, in 1919. He attended Columbia University before en listing in the U. S. Army during World War II. Following Cable's discharge in 1945, he and his first wife settled on Cape Cod, in Sandwich, Massachusetts, and he opened a business that repaired radios and TVs and sold phonograph records. In 1959, he liquidated his business and traveled to Reno to get a divorce so that he could marry the woman who has been his wife ever since. Within the year he and Patti, his new wife, were both working at Harolds Club. As Cable remembers it . . .

I started at Harolds Club as a janitor, but I had worked there only a couple of weeks before there was an opening for a "key man," and I got the job. One of the pleasant things that a key man did was pay off jackpots when a person hit a jackpot, the machine would drop twenty coins, and the rest of the money was physically paid to the player by the key man, who went over to the cashier and returned with the money.

Another part of a key man's job was to make mi nor repairs on slot machines. They were all reel slot machines at that time that was long before elec tronic slot machines. On the third floor in Harolds Club, they had the slot repair shop. Training to become a key man involved working with the slot repair people for three or four days. They taught you what was in side a slot machine.

On the floor, the key man would clear minor things, like a coin that got stuck or a reel that didn't want to turn. Somebody would be playing the slot machine, and something would happen where the machine didn't act the way it was supposed to. You had a key this is the reason they called you a key man that opened the front of the machine, and you cleared whatever minor trouble there was. If it was a major problem, you said, "I'm sorry," gave the person his coin back, and said, "I have to send this machine upstairs." Then you would take the machine off the floor and put it on a small elevator that would send it up to the third floor, where it would be completely gone over and any problems fixed.

There would be a slot manager on each shift . . . sometimes more than one, because we had slot machines on dif ferent floors. I worked on the second floor in what was called the Roaring Camp, which was where Harold's gun collection was. Hanging from the ceiling were some covered wagons and other types of wagons that were used in the old West.

I didn't want to be a key man for ever I wanted to deal. Back then, if you wanted to learn how to deal, you did it on your breaks. You were always on your feet as a key man, and you stayed on your feet learning to deal during your half hour break. But it was felt that if you really wanted to learn the game, you would be willing to sacrifice your break to do it. That was about the only way. It wasn't until later that they had actual dice and twenty one schools.

You learned to deal craps first, be cause there weren't many male twenty one dealers in Harolds. You got permis sion from a floor manager. You'd say, "I'd like to learn how to deal craps."

And he would say, "Well, go in on 'five dice' and tell them you want to learn how to deal."

You'd go in on a slow game with only one or two players that weren't making any big bets they might be playing just the line and the field or something like that. It was a relatively easy thing to do. You learned the game a little bit at a time, and if the game suddenly got ex citing, if there was a lot of money com ing in, then the regular dealer would step in, and you would just observe.

Even after you had learned how to deal, you might not get a chance. There had to be an opening somewhere. Somebody on one of the large tables might get sick, quit, or move, and then somebody from another table, like maybe the dime table, would move up. That meant there would be an opening on the dime table. Normally, that's what would happen: after they felt you had a degree of competence, they'd put you on the dime table to deal. The rest of the tables at that time were all dollar mini mums.

The dime table was just that: it was a dime table. There were no dime chips; you dealt in ten cent pieces. If you made mistakes, they didn't cost the house much money. And you learned a lot there, because the players on the dime table knew what they were doing. They knew more than the dealers sometimes. [laughter]

Harolds Club was a little different than the other clubs at that time in the other clubs, supervisors were called "pit bosses." They were called "assistant floor managers" in Harolds Club, and they were stationed outside the gaming area. In other words, they were walking around on the floor, not in a pit, and they were constantly in motion, moving around, observing the games, making sure that things were going correctly.

You tried to protect your game at all times. On the floor under each table, whether it was a twenty one table or a crap table or a roulette table, there was an electrical box with a button that you could press with your foot to ring a bell. In various places in the casino, there were boards that had all the tables listed. When you rang the bell, a light on a board would come on to indicate that the alarm was coming from your table. The bell could be heard throughout the building, and people would check one of the boards, and an assistant floor man ager would come over to your table.

Harolds Club dice tables were differ ent from other dice tables in Reno, and they were manned differently. They had

the same things on them, but they were laid out different I think because each had only two dealers, no stick man, and no box man. Oh, you had a box man if a really hot game came up and people were betting the limit, betting four or five hundred dollars on the numbers then somebody would stand by and make sure what was going on but never a stick man. The game was dealt by two people, that's all. Other casinos would sometimes have four on a crap table: three dealers and a box man.

When I was dealing dice, Chuck Webster, who was my shift manager, decided that he wanted a couple of men to deal twenty one, and he chose me and Bob Blake. Bob Blake was the son of one of the assistant floor managers, Ethel Blake. He wanted us guys to be able to deal twenty one so that when a player was giving a girl dealer a hard time, he could put one of us in. A twenty one dealer is kind of stuck behind the table, and the customers can sometimes give a girl a hard time. I'd be dealing on a crap table, and one of the assistant floor managers would come over and say, "Dave, go take out the girl on 11 twenty one." It was surprising how quickly a situation would be resolved if you took the girl out and put a man behind the table.

From just going in every once in awhile, I was later scheduled to deal twenty one on a regular basis. That enabled me to run breaks. Sometimes you would be scheduled to break two dice dealers. You'd give them each a break of half an hour, and then you'd also give a twenty one dealer a break.

Harolds had both regular twenty one and double deck twenty one tables. There were some different rules in dealing double deck there were two decks of cards, of course, and all cards were dealt face up, with the exception of the dealer's hand. There might have been three double deck games in the entire club, as opposed to sixty or seventy single deck games. Twenty one was a very popular game, more so than craps. And it was the easiest game to deal and the hardest game to protect.

As a dealer in the early 1960s, I think I was making thirteen dollars a shift in wages, but one thing that was different about Harolds Club was that you kept your tokes . . . you did not share them with other dealers. Tokes were a big factor in twenty one dealing, but a very small factor in dice dealing. In twenty one, players felt that when they won, they hadn't beaten the game, they had beaten the dealer. If a winner was appreciative, he would give the dealer a tip. If somebody made some money on the dice table, however, he thought the shooter had won it for him. Dice players didn't "beat" dealers the dice dealers were just out there to service them.

On the twenty one table, it's the dealer that's putting the cards out. On a crap table, it's the shooter that's throwing the dice. The dealers are only there for the purpose of paying off the bets and collecting the losers. So if there's somebody who really feels good about what they've done on the dice table, they're more apt to be appreciative of the fellow that's shooting the dice, not the dealers.

So, dice dealers had to rely on their wages as opposed to their tips, whereas a twenty one dealer relied on tips more than wages. Dice dealers did get *some* tips somebody that was really happy about what was happening would throw down a buck, and he would say, "Put this on 11 for the dealers." And, like any other bet on the table, they had to hit once in awhile.

In the early 1960s, I averaged two or three dollars a day in tips while dealing

dice. A twenty one dealer made more, but the amount depended a lot on the table they were dealing. Different tables had different clientele. The learning table on twenty one was a quarter table, but then there were $5 minimum tables, a couple of them on the second floor and one on the seventh floor. I finally ended up dealing the $5 tables, but I was al ways a pretty lucky dealer, so I didn't make many tokes. I used to beat every body. [laughter]

I dealt somewhere in the neighbor hood of three years. Then I was promoted to assistant floor manager. I didn't apply for it, I was just told, "This is what you're going to do now." I was transferred to the swing shift and went to work for Darl Voss, the shift manager.

I worked with Norman Maushardt and Joe Speicher, two assistant floor manag ers, when I was first promoted . . . kind of on the job training. They were two very different personalities. Norman was . . . like a bell would go off, and he'd say, "Come on, let's go!" Zoom, he'd run over there. And Joe Speicher would say, "Wait a minute. Maybe somebody else will answer it." [laughter] I spent about a week with them, ten days.

The floor manager's job was to go around and look in on the games that were going. If there was anything un usual, he would call the catwalk or the detective and ask them to observe and make sure everything was OK on such and such a game. It was not considered to be a very good plan for the floor man ager to stand there and hang over a table when there was some decent ac tion. It was just much better that it be observed from above, and when train ing to become a floor manager, you were introduced to the catwalk to see how things looked from up there, so that you would know exactly what they could see and what they couldn't see.

The floor manager not only had to protect the games and know what was going on, but he also had to greet cus tomers, particularly those that were re peat customers, and buy drinks for heavy players. I'd ask them if they'd like to have a drink, call the cocktail waitress over and say, "Buy this table a drink," to try to make the customers feel welcome.

At Harolds, unlike at other clubs, the tables were not in a pit, and there wasn't a pit boss keeping a sharp eye on every game there. The floor manager walked around the club, acted as a greeter, and, in addition to that, made sure that the club was not being taken advantage of by a customer or a dealer.

There was gambling on the first, sec ond, and seventh floors. The third floor was a restaurant. There were probably two floor managers each on the first and second floors, and one on the seventh. There would also be a floor manager who was running breaks, and, of course, the shift manager in charge of the shift. Then a little bit later they had games in the Arch Lounge, which was on the other side of the alley on Virginia Street be tween Commercial Row and Douglas Alley.

On the first floor of the main club, counting dice, twenty one, chuck a luck, and roulette, there were probably thirty five to forty games, with only two floor men covering them all. That was cutting it pretty thin, compared to other casinos. In a casino with pits, a supervi sor would manage about half a dozen games. We would really be running around when those bells started ringing!

The floor managers depended a lot on the catwalk to make sure that things were going all right. Of course, there was another thing Back then, a $100 bet

was unusual action, and if a twenty one dealer had a $100 bet, she automatically hit the bell to summon a floor manager to come take a look. He might decide: "Oh, I know this guy. He's OK, and he bets this kind of money all the time." Or, "This is somebody that I'm not sure of, so maybe I need to have the catwalk look and see what's going on."

Shift managers tended to put their best dealers, the ones they had the most confidence in, on the tables that were going to get the most action. There was another aspect to it, also, and that was percentages. In other words, how much did Table 12 twenty one win on a particular shift, and who was dealing it on that shift? This would be not only for twenty one but also for dice tables, roulette wheels, and so forth. They wanted to know who was dealing that table on a shift when it lost a thousand dollars, or whatever. In other words, they kept a record of how much each dealer won, on an average, over a period of time.

The idea was that the percentages are in favor of the house, and when a certain dealer on a certain table is dealing for a certain length of time, the average win should be somewhat close to what is expected. If it is a lot less than expected, there's a question: "Why is it that this dealer wins less than the percentages say she should?" This was one of the things I tackled later on.

Floor managers used to work a year on a shift, then go to another shift. My wife was working at Harolds Club as a dealer, and the rule was that if a floor manager and wife worked together, they changed shifts together. In fact, the entire crew changed, including the shift manager. That way, the floor managers, the shift managers, and everybody got to know all of the dealers in a club. And there were different regular customers on different shifts, and this gave you a chance to meet more of your customers. After all, the most important person in a casino is the customer.

Dealers were scheduled regularly on the same tables. Some tables were better than others the more play a table got, the more chances to make tips. The best tables were given to the dealers that had the best averages or had been there the longest or were considered to be more experienced. Generally speaking, a guy that had been at Harolds long enough to be a floor manager . . . his wife had been there for some time also and would be an experienced dealer, so the floor managers' wives often dealt the better tables. It was generally understood that if you were a floor manager's wife, you were going to get a little preferential treatment, but not always. Sometimes the floor managers' wives didn't get the best tables. There was a table that was right alongside the entrance to the men's room, and it was not considered to be one of the best! [laughter]

Phil Cirves was Harold Sr.'s son in law, and Tom Frias was Pappy's brother in law. They came to work at the club, and they were being broken in on the dime table, five dice, prior to being promoted to floor managers. Obviously, they had to find a place for these guys. I was low man on the floor managers totem pole, so I was called up to Harold Jr.'s office and told that I was going to be taken off the floor.

He asked me, "What would you like to do? You got some choices: you can go out on the streets, or you can go back to dealing."

I said, "I'd like to go up in the catwalk." I knew they needed someone up there who understood the games:

One day I had been on the seventh floor dealing the dice table, and during

one of its dead moments, this guy had come up to me and said, "When somebody puts two chips over here, what does that mean?"

I said, "Those are odds on a line bet. Why do you want to know?"

He said, "Well, I work in the catwalk."

I'm thinking to myself, "Oh, my God!"

I thought that maybe we needed somebody in the catwalk that could understand what was going on in the games, and I didn't want to go back to dealing . . . I mean, after having been on the floor for awhile and giving these people a hard time! [laughter] But the catwalk would be a new challenge. The guys up there had not dealt any of the games, and I felt they lacked the experience to protect the club the way it should be protected. If you haven't dealt craps, you can't get over a hot crap game and know whether it's being dealt properly or not.

They didn't fully understand dealing, but they were not looking so much for people dealing the game improperly as for customers stealing money. They could teach me what customers did illegally marking cards, crimping cards, bet pressing, things like that. Also, about this time is when card counting first was coming into its flower, and we spent a lot of time learning to spot card counters. You had to be able to count right along with them.

To learn how to count cards, I worked with Johnny George, a man up from Las Vegas. He worked in the catwalk, and I learned a lot from him about spotting card counters and being able to count cards. Most of the people working up there were incapable of doing the things that you had to do to properly count cards. So what I did at the time and I didn't realize that I was being different was I made a little chart. Somebody that was observing the game could look at it, and it would tell him the player's or the house's advantages.

Here's what was going on with card counting: If I'm on a dice table, and I throw two sixes, those two sixes are still on the dice. The odds of that being thrown again haven't changed at all; they're still exactly the same. On the roulette wheel, if the ball drops in number thirty six, the number thirty six is still on the wheel. But in twenty one, it's entirely different. In twenty one, the cards are being used up. It's almost as if you'd said once the ball drops in the thirty six on the roulette wheel, thirty six isn't going to be there anymore. So the odds are constantly changing on a twenty one table.

One of the biggest drains on casinos at that time was people that always left the club with a little more than they came in with, because they were counting cards on you. An MIT mathematics professor, Dr. Edward O. Thorpe, developed the basic strategy in the early 1960s. His system required the player to know the number of cards valued ten (10s and face cards) remaining in the deck at the start of any deal. The player would then have an edge in deciding when to hit and when not to hit and in knowing when the odds favored him instead of the house. Dr. Thorpe said, "OK, when the odds are in the player's favor, make a big bet. When the odds are in the house's favor, make a small bet." This, of course, was one of the most important things that the catwalk should know. I mean, a guy's been betting a dollar, and all of a sudden he's betting a hundred. Why?

Thorpe proved that a good card counter can beat a twenty one game consistently if no action is taken against him. He can even take advantage of some of the house's defenses against counting. For instance, let's say we have

a rule that if there's a $100 bet, you'll break the deck, which means that you reshuffle. Well, it could be that on one hand the odds are absolutely terrible for the player, so he puts $100 down to get a reshuffle. But if you could get a dealer that could count too, you really had the guy over a barrel. I mean, every time that the deck was bad for the house, you re shuffled. Every time it was good for the house, you left it in.

As we crawled around in the catwalk, we looked for card counters matter of fact, the calls went from the catwalk to the floor managers more often than the other way around as far as card counters were concerned. In addition to that, we took Polaroid pictures of certain people. If we decided that Mr. A was a card counter, then we would take a picture of him through the one way mirrors. Later, we'd show it to the shift managers and say, "This guy's a card counter."

It wasn't only card counters; there were other types of crossroaders, too people that cheated on the roulette wheel, pressing bets, things like that. Any person that we suspected of these things, we would take their picture, and the club could tell them, "We don't want your action," and ask them to leave. Or we might alert the shift manager and say, "The fellow that's on first base on such and such twenty one table is counting cards. I suggest you break the deck on him." (When you have a full deck, the house has the advantage. It's only when a lot of the small cards have been used up and there's a lot of ten count cards left that the advantage goes from the house to the player.) So if you know somebody is a card counter, and he



Above the keno game, a main floor surveillance catwalk with one-way mirrored windows runs the full length of the room.

knows you're going to shuffle after every deal, he's not going to play with you; he's going to leave.

Later on, when I was in charge of the catwalk, one of the things that I instituted was putting dealers to work there. *That* required some changes. The question was, "Why should I, as a dealer, go up and work in the catwalk for their wages?"

I told Pappy Smith and Jim Hunter, "If we want people up in the catwalk that know what they're looking at and know when the game is being dealt straight, we've got to pay them better. Why should they do it otherwise?"

Pappy was eventually persuaded to increase the pay of catwalkers. I could tell dealers I was recruiting, "Don't expect to get a whole bunch of money all at once. We're going to get you raises a little bit at a time, but it'll work." And it did.

Another thing that changed was we were able to have people *sitting* over a table. I could tell an observer, "I want you to be over Table 18 all day. I want to know exactly what's going on at that table." This would be to analyze every thing: analyze the play, analyze the play ers, analyze the dealing. Is the dealer dealing enough hands? Does the dealer have a tendency to talk so much that she's not dealing? And so forth. Most of the dealers did fine, they were excellent dealers.

We would look for reasons why a dealer's average was low, or why this guy was always wanting to play with this dealer. Maybe the dealer is giving away her hole card. Maybe it's intentional, maybe it's not. How do you figure that out? Well, a player will almost always do the same thing under the same circum stances. If I'm the dealer, and I've got a ten showing, why is it that sometimes this fellow hits a thirteen and other times he stands on it? Maybe it's just hunch. If it's hunch, there's going to be a correct right and wrong percentage. But what if he's right more than he's wrong? He's getting a signal from something; some thing is telling him.

Here's an example: A dealer has a face card up. Looks under it, she's got a pat hand, and she holds her deck at a certain position. The next time she looks under her top card, she's got a five un der there. She'll hold the deck in a differ ent position, because she's figured no body should hit. When she had a pat hand, everybody should hit; therefore, she holds the deck so she's ready to hit them. And this way, "nobody should hit, because I've got a five under here, so I'm going to hold the deck back here." That tendency could be either subcon scious or it could be a signal.

It is the job of the person in the cat walk to point out this tendency. It's the job of management to take the dealer aside and say, "Do you know what you're doing?" Management has to make the determination whether this is accidental or not.

I used to run breaks on five dice and a chuck a luck. There was a quarter table there along one side of the chuck a luck and two on the other side. Chuck a luck was dead so much of the time that I started watching this person deal the quarter twenty one, and I would try and figure, "Why is she doing this, or why is she doing that?" A twenty one dealer *has* to do everything exactly the same, regardless of whether they're stiff or pat. They have to hold the deck exactly the same, same facial expressions, say the same thing, because some of those smart guys could pick up on any varia tions. So one of the things the catwalk looks for is erratic play on the part of a customer. Why does this customer some times hit a stiff and other times does not?

Of course, there's another thing that you have to think about when you take somebody from a table and put him in the catwalk: you have to trust him. This person is completely on his own. He's sit ting up there by himself watching a table. He could be sound asleep, and no one would know the difference.

Each of us had a code name. Mine was "Ben Ives." If I wanted to get in touch with a floor manager, I could page, "Joe Speicher, call Ben Ives, please." He'd call me back. The telephone would ring up in the catwalk, and I'd say, "There's a guy on such and such table doing. . . . " But cheating players and cheating dealers were rare. They were really rare!

If we found a dealer that we were sure was cheating, nothing would hap pen to this dealer because of just one person's observations. Another of us would go over to watch and confirm she was putting chips in her sub. When it was definitely established, then we would call down and say, "The dealer on such and such twenty one is going south with some chips." Then one of the floor managers would come up to observe it personally. I didn't want the possibility that any dealer would be fired because she wouldn't sleep with somebody. I had to have positive proof.



David Cable, c. 1966. "*Each of us had a code name. Mine was Ben Ives.*"

When I took over in the catwalk, I worked on an eighteen hour day instead of a twenty four hour day in other words, I would work six hours, go home for twelve, come in for six more. That meant I was seeing all three shifts; I was seeing all the dealers; I was seeing all the people that worked in the catwalk con tinually, because I was coming there at a different time every day. Those under me were working eight on and sixteen off, but their shift changed in the middle of the downstairs shift, so the catwalk people saw the night shift dealers and the graveyard shift, or the graveyard and the day shift.

Four people a shift were up there in the catwalks. And I was not sitting at a desk when this was going on I was crawling around up there, too. We were observing not only the games, but also the cashier in the dining room. We were watching the vault, the cashiers, every body. Once in awhile Harold Jr. would come up there, and sometimes he'd bring up somebody to watch the game from above. It wasn't something I wanted to do, but it wasn't something that I could object to either. It would usu ally be one of the entertainers that was working there Bob Newhart was one. It was a rare thing, but once in awhile it would happen.

I worked in the catwalk for about three years. Harold Jr. felt that I was do

ing a good job up there, and for two years he gave me a $750 bonus at Christmas. I also got raises, but in 1968 I let it be known that when there was an opening, I would like to go back down on the floor. Danny Hill was one of the dealers that I had brought up to the catwalk, and I figured Danny would be a good man to take over running it if I left, which I did. I went back down and worked on Chuck Webster's shift from 1968 until October of 1970.

The club was sold in June of 1970, and it was about that time that my wife and I decided we would retire. Change of ownership was one factor in our decision. We had worked for the Smith family for ten years, and all of a sudden they're not there anymore. I didn't want to continue there. I was ready to retire anyway, even though I was only fifty one years old.



"We were observing not only the games, but also the cashiers in the dining room." Third floor restaurant with catwalk in the ceiling, c. 1960.

8

Charles Clifford

Charles Clifford was born in Reno, Nevada in 1931. After graduating from Sparks High School in 1949, he worked four years on his uncle's ranch south of Sparks, on what is now Kleppe Lane.

In 1953, Clifford took a ob with Harolds Club's sign division, making billboard signs. During seventeen years at Harolds, he worked as a change apron, key man, dealer, and floor boss. As he remembers it,

That winter they laid everybody off, but in August of 1954, I was rehired and assigned to the shop, mak ing wooden drop boxes. My mother was in charge of insurance and payroll at Harolds, and Esther Stephens asked her if I wanted to come in to the club to work. I did, and I was hired as a change apron.

Chuck Webster, the shift manager, took me over to George Novack, who was the slot manager. I had never seen so many people in a building in my life. The club was *packed*, and it wasn't that small in them days the Covered Wagon room was there; the Roar ing Camp room was there. They also had some slot machines in the Music Room, and they had a prob lem with people taking money out of them, so across the backs of *all* of them they ran a pipe and chained it on both ends so people couldn't get behind them.

I worked the day shift, and Bruna Pope broke me in. Her husband, Homer, was a key man, and Bruna was a change apron there for years. In the morning, when you came to work, you'd go over to the little cashier's cage and get your bankroll of four or five hundred dollars. You'd sign for it, count your money, and take it over and put it in your locker. A lot of the lockers were on ramps that we stood on to sell change. Today it's said that ramps take up too much room on a casino floor, but we didn't have to fight crowds to sell change back then, whereas today, without ramps, you're always having trouble with the crowds.

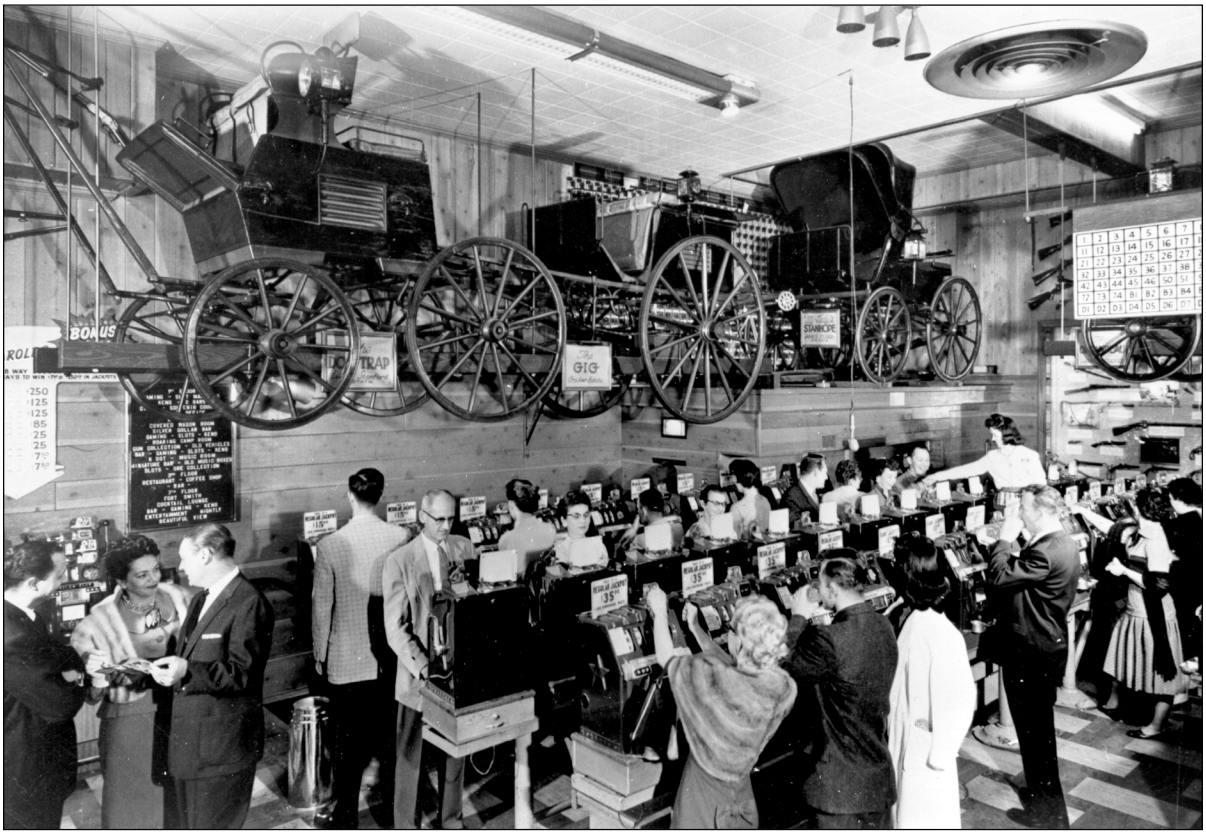
I was making ten dollars a day for eight hours. On the ranch I had been working ten hours a day for sev enty cents an hour, so I thought, "Gee, this is pretty easy work." But them aprons were heavy. It's amaz ing how heavy some of them aprons were when they were filled with money!

The cashiers used to give us our nickels loose, and when we weren't busy, we would roll them into "nickel gizmos," dollar rolls of nickels. We also carried changers on our waist, like bus conductors had. You needed changers for somebody who wanted ten dimes or five nickels, so that you didn't have to open your rolled money.

All day, I'd sell cash, and at the end of the day I turned in my cash, and it had to balance to what I'd started with. I was short $10 one day, and, to this day, I remember what that woman looked like who took it from me. She played in there every day we had a lot of locals that played in there all the time. She had asked for a roll of dimes, and I give her $10 in dimes and a $10 bill back, so that night I was short. Only time I was ever short. You can't ask them to give it back.

Mostly I worked in the Roaring Camp Room, where all the covered wagons were Bruna Pope and myself and a couple of other gals. There weren't too many male change aprons in those days. One was an old guy name of Ralph, a retired jewelry man from back East. He'd come to Reno and lost all his money, so he had to go to work as a change apron. Many change aprons would eventually become dealers or cashiers, but some didn't. When they put in the first $5 machines, the change aprons made good tips, so a lot of them didn't want to be dealers.

Along the walls in Roaring Camp, they had nickel, dime, and quarter slots, and they had dollars by the cashier's cage. When I became a key man, I paid jackpots out of that cage. When you paid a jackpot, you pulled a cord that



Part of the very large Roaring Camp Room, with wagons hanging from the ceiling.

operated a meter and rang a bell that sounded like a trolley bell. There was one meter in the cashier's cage and one meter outside; that was the one the key man rang. One was for nickels, one was for dimes, one for quarters, and so on, and the meters had to balance at the end of the shift.

Harolds had a lot of local people come in every day, and every once in awhile, Pappy'd come through, and he'd say, "Pay all the people on them dollar machines a jackpot." So you'd tell each customer that Pappy Smith had said to pay him a jackpot, then you'd go ring it up and give him $145. It created a lot of good will.

Every machine had a number. You had a sheet at the cage where you would mark down all the jackpots, so at the end of the day you knew how many jackpots each machine had hit. The customers could look at the jackpot sheets, too, and some of them would say, "Them are my machines that hit."

We didn't often move a machine. People get where they know them in a big club like Harolds, if you moved them around, they would never find them again, and we wanted customers to find their machines. They'd come and read that little card every day "Has my machine hit? Has my machine hit?"

The machines had letters and numbers to identify them. For example, "A" was a nickel machine, "R" was a dime, "O" was a quarter, "L" was a half dollar, and "D" was a dollar machine. So when you went up to the cashier to report a jackpot, you'd say, "L 15," if that particular half dollar machine had hit a jackpot. They'd know what size of jackpot it was, and they'd give you the money, and you'd mark it on your sheet, hit the meter, and away you'd go.

I was a change apron until early spring of 1955, and then I became a key man. That was a pretty good job. A key man would open up the machines if they were jammed, fix the jam, and put them back into play. If you couldn't fix them, then you'd have to send them to the shop. I was probably getting twelve dollars a shift.

I was on keys for a year, and then I broke into the pit. They told me if I wanted to learn the pit, I could go practice on my breaks; so every break I got, I would go in on a table and practice. I usually went to 10 dice up on the second floor Muriel Hefler was there; that was Lee Hefler's wife. There were a lot of women dice dealers in Harolds, because they wanted at least one woman dealer on every dice table. Hazel Garnett, Betty Carpenter . . . there were a lot of them over the years.

It took me two or three months to learn how to deal. (I never dealt twenty one; I just dealt dice.) One day Chuck Webster said, "You ready to go on dice?"

And I said, "Sure," and I went down and started dealing the dime table. Beverly Davis and Chappie [Ed Chapman] and Lee Crawford and I were all break ins on the table at that time. There were no experienced dealers on the dime table, and everybody taught you their own way, because there was no set way of dealing.

They would bring new dice up from the vault every shift and put them on the game, and they would never change dice during the shift, which is unusual. A lot of the big casinos, if they started getting beat, they would run in four or five sets of dice in eight hours. Harolds Club never did.

One time Pappy held up a pair of dice, and he said, "If a man can lose



Female dealers learning to deal dice, c. 1950.

twenty thousand dollars with this pair of dice, he's entitled to win twenty thou sand with this pair of dice." And he was right. We go by that theory today at the Sundowner if we don't change dice at the start of a shift, then we leave them in for eight hours. We don't take them out unless they are chipped or broken, but that doesn't happen very often. The Harolds Club dice were little bitty things, smaller than most dice, and they were feather edged as opposed to razor edged, so they didn't get nicked up too bad when they hit the silver dollars. (They call them "bevel edge" today.)

Another thing that was unique about Harolds Club dice was that they had se rial numbers on them. We were taught to check the numbers, and that was sup posed to stop cheats from running in their own dice, but it didn't work too well. The first month after they introduced num bered dice, there was a heck of a dice game, and these guys came in, saw what the numbers were, went out in their truck, stamped the numbers on crooked dice, and come back in. [laughter] When the dealers checked the dice, they thought, "Oh, they're our numbers; everything's fine." The table lost a lot of money.

Every shift, one of the floor bosses would come in with new dice, and the dealers would check the serial numbers on the dice that were going in against the numbers on the card that the floor boss had brought up from the vault. They'd also check the dice going *out* to make sure they were the right ones. There was two cards, and the dealer had to

sign them both. You thought you had a foolproof method of checking the dice for guys cheating you, but you didn't.

The only chips we had were five dollar chips; we didn't have dime chips or quarter chips. We dealt with actual dimes, actual quarters, and on a seven out, you just raked all the coins to the center of the table and picked them up you can sort them out pretty fast when you get used to it. We also had a changer on the table. If somebody wanted five dollars worth of quarters, we could hit the changer and give them that instead of counting them all out. 'Course, we were good at thumbing the dimes out, too . . . you know, shoot five or ten dimes out at a time.

The top dealer pay at that time was twenty dollars a shift, and I was probably making about sixteen on the dime table. You'd also make some tips, two or three dollars a day, mostly when other dealers played at your table. At Harolds, employees were permitted to gamble in the club on breaks or after work, and when you dealt to some of them people, that's where you'd make your tip money.

The dime table was busy almost twenty four hours a day, every day. You'd have ten cent bets, and right next to them somebody playing $100 (the flat bet limit) and somebody else betting dimes or quarters. It was *really* a mixed up . . . you had quite a combination of bets on the layout. Sometimes you'd forget a little dime, because with all the other stuff, you wouldn't even see it. Also, we had props on the end and in the middle. The props are the hard way bets and the one roll bets. Sometimes you'd get people trying to press them, because we had no stick men. We didn't even have a cutout for a stick man or a box man, so you were really on your own.

The Smith family knew you would make mistakes when you were learning everybody does. But when you make mistakes with dimes and quarters, it's not going to cost the house much. It's cheaper than having a box man there watching the game all the time; and, of course, if you overpay somebody, they just play that much longer and lose it back anyway. Chuck Webster in later years used to go around to them old people on the twenty five cent twenty one tables and give them two or three dollars each in quarters out of the tray; and man, they're all happy, and they play for hours! It was a good shill. It gave them something to do, didn't hurt anybody; and it gave the dealers experience.

I dealt on the dime table for six or eight months, and then I started running breaks on another table. Chuck Webster said, "Do you know chuck a luck?"

I said, "*Oh, no!*"

He said, "Go over ten minutes early and learn it."

Now, if you get good action on chuck a luck, it's a hard game for one person to protect. It used to be a two man table in the years before me, that's how much action there used to be. But they had it cut down at Harolds, and they only used one dealer when I dealt it.

The minimum bet was a nickel, and the maximum was $500. We had this old cowboy that used to come in from Elko Carl something. He'd come in and bet $500 a game and beat you. Then all day after that, you'd only get nickel players. [laughter] Hard to get your money back. Carl . . . he'd just chunk it in. Wore a big white cowboy hat, white haired guy, no



Evelyn Webster (left) deals chuck-a-luck to Paula Skinner and Charles Beck.

teeth. He was a gambler, though. He'd play twenty one, then come over to chuck a luck and start betting $500, but he didn't have a system, and we would beat him sometimes, too, just like every body else.

Chuck a luck was fast action on your money and had a good house percent age, so it was a good house game. They played it a lot in the old mining camps, but you don't see the game anymore. The last one I saw was at Circus Circus in the early 1990s.

Some dealers dealt the same table for years, and others would work differ ent tables and cover people's day offs. Certain dealers would give vacations to everybody, but normally they had the same people on the same table for years Harolds was a big store, and they didn't want repeat customers looking all over for a particular dealer. Harolds stressed that they were a friendly club. They wanted us to talk to the customers, be nice to them. They wanted the customer to be able to find you and say, "Hi, Chuck. How are you?"

"I'm fine. How're you doing? How's your wife?"

I knew my schedule a week ahead of time, be cause they'd post it in the rec room. I was on Number 5 Dice at first, then I was on Number 1 Dice for five years. You knew what hours you would work, but they did have a lot of different shifts. On weekends I'd come in at 6:00 in the morning and work until 2:00 in the afternoon on 12 Dice on the second floor.

For years I worked six days a week, because I was raising a family, and my wife didn't work. But the sixth day wasn't overtime pay.

On Number 1 Dice, I had the same partner every day. It was John Klatt for years, and then later Hazel Garnet, Betty Carpenter, Lee Crawford, and Hal Thorpe. I also dealt with Chappie a lot. For years, "Cous" Couslouskie was on 4 Dice, Vern Pratt on 7 Dice, and Kelly Black on 6 Dice. Even the relief dealers didn't change for years. Just like the slot ma chines, they didn't move dealers around; they kept them in the same place.

Dealers made very good money in them days, good tips . . . even some of the dice dealers. (I never did, but, hey, I had a shot just like everybody else. I think sometimes the more you need money, the less you make.) Lou Cardella had a heck of a following. I saw Lou several times make a couple of thousand dol

lars in tips in one shift. That was a lot of money, especially when your wages were only twenty four dollars a shift!

My biggest day in all my nine years of dealing dice was $260. Lee Crawford told me, "Hey, you ought to go dealing twenty one. That's where the money is." He was right, because a twenty one dealer sometimes could make real good money, but I wanted to be a good dice dealer, and I thought, "Oh, I'll just stick to dice."

Harolds Club didn't have many men twenty one dealers at that time, and I don't think they had any that just dealt twenty one; they had to deal dice, too, and most had a woman as a partner when they did. Most of the women who dealt dice liked it better than dealing twenty one. It's just like roulette back then some of them people *never* dealt twenty one, and they made a good liv ing on roulette. Today, if you had a dealer on roulette that didn't split with a twenty one dealer, she'd starve.

Harolds Club had big roulette games, with a lot of good customers, and they might bet stacks of chips six or eight inches tall on a number. We'd take a new dealer before they broke in on twenty one and have them rack chips to get them used to handling money. They'd have to sort them by color, pick them up, and stack them. When a new dealer could handle chips real good, then they'd teach her twenty one.

On day shift, Harolds had 200 deal ers; swing shift, we had 200 dealers; and graveyard, 120. We had about 60 twenty one tables, 6 roulettes, and 14 dice tables. When I went on the floor, nobody wanted to do the schedules for my shift, so I said, "Well, I'll do them." I was supposed to do them for three months, and I did them for three years.



"Harolds Club had big roulette games."

At Harolds Club, with so many women working, you always got a few casual ties, so we scheduled a few extra deal ers every shift, and when they came in, you put them in for whoever was sick. Then we had early outs, kids that wanted to go home early. If the dealers asked to go home, you paid them for the hours they worked. But if you had dealers com ing in, and it was slow, you'd send them home, but you'd pay them for the full eight hours. That was pretty generous.

The Smiths were good to work for they didn't bother you. In the winter, when it was slow, the dealers that worked four days cut to three, the ones that worked five cut to four, and they never had any mass layoffs. Everybody just tightened their belts and waited until spring.

On the twenty one games, relief dealers worked mostly three table breaks twenty minutes off, sixty minutes on. But on the dice games, the relief dealers had to break two dice tables, and that meant they had to relieve four people. Sometimes we worked two hours and forty minutes between breaks. You'd work and work on a busy day . . . no stick man to help with the props or anything.

The relief dealer split tips with each table, forty, forty, twenty. In other words, if there was $100 in tips, the two regular dealers would each get forty, and the relief dealer would get twenty. Then he'd do the same with the other table. Now, on the second floor, where the relief dealers relieved one dice table and two twenty one tables, they kept whatever they made on twenty one they never commingled their tips with the twenty one dealers.

I don't think any of the dealers in other clubs were keeping their own tips in those days. Most dealers like that. Oh, yes! And it leads them to be friendlier to customers there were a lot of twenty one dealers that kept customers' names and addresses and sent them Christmas cards, which would bring the customers back to the club. A lot of our dealers and floor bosses were even invited to people's homes in other states, which is quite a nice compliment. Lots of dealers met a lot of good customers that way.

The tips were better on the high limit tables years ago they were much better. Many twenty one dealers made a thousand dollars in a night on more than one occasion. And in them days, you didn't have to pay taxes on the tokes like you do today. Now dealers have to pay so much in taxes! All that money is going to the federal government, where it used to stay in town. A dealer would have a good night; he'd stop for a drink and tip the bartender; the bartender would buy flowers for his wife; and then the florist would All the money stayed in town, and we never felt much of a recession. Now you take these millions of dollars and send them to the government to waste, and it takes a lot of money out of the town.

I dealt to Nick Sahati when he lost $120,000 one day, and it was all cash. And I boxed his games a few times. We started boxing his games because of his obnoxious behavior he was nice off the table, but on the table he'd get kind of mean. He looked mean, too. One time he said something, and this sailor hit him, and I see him go flying by. I said, "Well, what the heck's going on?" But if you got talking to him about his family, he was pretty nice.

Nick would swear at people or just *glare* at them, and he looked mean. He was big, too, probably six five. But he was probably the biggest action we dealt to.

Another customer that we got good action from was "The man in the barrel," Al Williams. It was his caricature as "the man in the barrel" that appeared in advertising on our matchbooks and everything. In real life he was big, but when he was in the barrel, he just looked like a real skinny guy in a top hat and a barrel. I heard that he loaned the Smiths money one time back before casinos could borrow money from banks, and that's why he was always kind of a favorite.

One time Al was on Number 1 Dice when Harold Sr. came by. Williams bet $5,000, and he said, "What are you going to do with that, Harold?"

"Well, I'll double it."

Harold put out ten thousand, and he lost it. Then Al threw out ten thousand in cash and said, "OK, what are you going to do with *that*, Harold?"



"I'll double it."

So Harold put up twenty thousand, and Al had thirty thousand going, and he finally won it. Harold said, "Oh, well . . . that's the way it goes."

It was a big bet, and I ran out of chips I had to have them bring more $100 chips to the table before I could pay Al. I've heard they had $500 and $1,000 chips, but I never did see any. I understand they took them out to the gun club when big players were in town, but I never dealt out there We always dealt just with hundreds.

Early every Saturday, business would start picking up, and the club would be jammed all the way through Sunday night. There was a lot of play you couldn't hardly get out from behind the tables. Nearly every Saturday they'd open up Number 3 Dice in the Music Room, which later was renamed Room 25, and they'd have me work overtime on it.

Saturday night was just like New Year's every week, even in the wintertime before the freeway went through. It might take people fourteen hours to drive over from Sacramento on old Route 40, and I'm thinking, "What are they doing up here?" [laughter] But they'd stay and play and just have a good time, and the action was great. In addition to the silver play, there was a lot of $5 and $20 chip play, and we'd get good $100 chip play from some people. (Harolds Club was the only club to use $20 chips. When I went to the Sundowner, and all of a sudden I was working with 25s, I had to think different. You have to think chip for chip instead of the value until you get used to them.)

On January 1 of 1964, I went on the floor. They put three of us on the floor at the same time: Bill Parga, Dave Hughes, and me. Harold Jr. just came up to me and said, "Would you like to be a floor boss? If it don't work out, you can go back dealing."

I thought, "Well, it'd be a good change." I almost starved, though, because we didn't make much money on the floor. I was making $24 dealing, and I started on the floor at $30 a day and no tips at all. That was a tough move, really. After six months I went to $35, and after a year to $40 a day. That was a little better. You really punished yourself financially by going on the floor, but I wanted to try it.

When you were put on the floor, they gave you a little training. First of all, they just had me wander around, telling me what to look for; and then Laverl Kimpton, who was in charge of surveillance, took me up in the catwalk and taught me how to count cards, how to

look at things, and he gave me a differ ent way to look at the floor. That helped a lot. He did a good job there he was sharp.

I started on day shift on the floor, and then they put me on swing. When you know everybody, as I did on days, it's hard to be a boss you're better off to go to another shift where you don't know the people. I worked on Dan Orlich and Don McDonnel's shift for years. They were the number one and number two men on the shift . . . Don more than Dan, be cause Dan did a lot of trap shooting and traveled all over the country. I did the dealers' schedule for them, and they *never* questioned who I put where. They never said, "Put this one on, don't put that one on none of that." They were great to work for.

Darl Voss and Tom Davis were num ber one and number two on another shift, and Cornel Fagetan was in charge of a shift for awhile, and Chuck Webster. Chuck was great. Boy, people loved him. Glen Botorff was there for years; George Wilson; Jim Wilbur. Keith Jones was a good boss. There were a lot of good people there. Mel Dion . . . he used to say, "Can't talk to you now, Chuck. I'm on a break." [laughter]

Jim Hunter was the general manager, right next to the Smiths in authority. He was easy to work with, and he was a quiet man, always fair. Loved to play the dollar slot machines; he'd play them while he was working. Jessie Beck loved to play them dollar machines, too. There were a lot of good players that worked at Harolds.

Harold Sr. came by once when some floor bosses were really looking at a game. He says, "Hey, you want to watch that game, go up in the catwalk." Harold didn't want anyone sweating the games a *lot*. You got to watch them and see what's going on, but he didn't want them hawking them that much. That's what the catwalk's for. And he was right somebody can lose forty thousand, and there's no problem; but let him win forty, and everybody's thinking he's doing something wrong, when it's not neces sarily true.

As far as protecting the games, Laverl Kimpton probably did more than any body else. He'd sit and talk to you and tell you this, tell you that, teach you how to handle card counters. In the early 1960s the counters were playing hot and heavy before we finally figured out what they were doing. At one time I thought Harolds was going to have to close the twenty one tables down, because they were so much in the red . . . the counters were winning that much. See, nobody knew what was going on. Counters'd come in and bet $500 and win, and then drop down to $25. They were tearing everybody apart.

Junior put me in charge of the dice dealers on all three shifts, and so I jumped around on the shifts for awhile. The dice tables weren't doing that well p. c. wise, and he thought maybe we could do something to bring it up. I went up in the catwalk and watched everybody deal for a while, then I sat down and talked with them about their weaknesses and their dealing technique. You can only do so much, and if they wanted to work with you, they would. We had some excellent dealers, but we had some on big tables that were really weak. A few, they should have gotten rid of, but they didn't. I made them aware that they were be ing watched from the catwalks, and over the space of a year, we brought the percentage up about 4 percent, which is a lot of money.

One time Harold Senior come in to deal with me on Number 12 Dice. His

friend, Smokey Anderson, was playing, and Senior said, "I'll show you how to deal," and he come in and started deal ing. He did all right, but he hadn't dealt for a long time. He said, "Hey, kid, watch me. I might be a little rusty."

The Smiths were not only dealing, they were gambling in the club. I think one of the main reasons the state passed a law making it illegal to gamble in your own casino was because the Smiths were gambling quite a bit in Harolds. For ex ample, Junior played real big money on Number 10 Dice a couple of times, and one time he won $325,000 or something like that. He bought Senior and himself brand new cars.

When I was the relief man, when I first came in, I'd go down to the vault and get new dice for all the tables, change the dice on all the tables, and take the used ones back. After doing the sched ules, I'd break the floor boss in the Arch Lounge, then the boss on the seventh floor. That was pretty much what I did every shift on day shift.

On graveyard, the main shift was 3:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., but the swing shift had 8:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m., 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., and 10 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. tables. So on graveyard, when it started quieting down, you had to get your 7:00 to 3:00 dealers out first, then your 8:00 to 4:00's. By the time you got the five o'clockers out, you'd turn around and there's no body left. [laughter] The graveyard guy had a lot of work to get all the tables closed. You had to read them and close them and make sure you didn't have overtime on one table and dealers go ing home early on another. When the day shift came in, they would open back up whatever they needed that day.

Your responsibilities were different depending on what shift you worked. On graveyard, you got to get all the outside games closed, and that takes a lot of maneuvering. Whereas on swing shift, it's just, "Oh, the 10:00 dealers are here." They go to a certain table, and you open it.

When I first went on the floor, supervi sors wore western clothes, just like the dealers. Then, when Harold Junior got pretty well involved, he put us in gray sharkskin suits. The Smiths had a tailor, Steve Tarn, who was a good customer at Harolds, and he made all the suits for the floor bosses. They figured if there's an argument, a suit shows more authority, and the customers know who they're talking to. Instead of just a name badge, now we wore a suit, and it made us look more authoritative. We all started with gray suits, and then shortly after that, they put the shift managers in black suits, so they could distinguish the shift manag ers from the regular floor bosses.



Chuck Clifford, 1967. *"Harold put us in gray sharkskin suits."*

Harolds Club bought the first two suits for you. They bought me a third when a customer ruined one of mine. I had gone to the Arch Lounge to check on some body on the schedule. Well, they had this drunk woman, *really* drunk; in fact, she was on the floor. She grabbed my coat and started pulling, and she tore all the buttons off and ruined the suit. I couldn't believe it! We had her arrested.

At Harolds we didn't have pits, so we had no pit bosses we were called floor, bosses because we were all over the floor. Every place there was a post, Harolds put a twenty one table, and we had them all over the place. There was no such thing as working in a pit. It worked pretty well a floor boss, when he's moving around on the outside, can see a lot more that's going on than if he's stuck in a pit with the dealers' backs to him, but it could get pretty hectic trying to cover so much territory. Even on crowded Saturday nights, there would just be Joe Fontaine and me and maybe one more boss for the whole second floor, with four dice tables and no stick men, no box men, and we had high limit pits in Room 25. You just kept moving just fought the crowd and kept moving.

Sometimes it was all you could do just to answer the bells. There were three buttons on a box on the floor underneath each table, and if a dealer needed a floor boss bad, she'd step on one real hard, and it would ring a bell and light a red light on a big board up on the wall. If she wanted a keno runner, she stepped on another button. Half of the table num ber would light up on the board, and the keno runner would come to the table. And cocktails the same. They called the cocktails, floor bosses, and keno all from the three buttons on the floor. It worked good; it really did.

Probably the most important part of a floor boss's job at Harolds Club was public relations . . . trying to work with all your customers and trying to get a good working relation with your dealers. It's so important to get everybody working with you. Like Chuck Webster people would give their right arm to work for him.

Cheating, you always have to watch for, but you don't want to make it the top priority, because the majority of time there is no cheating it just happens once in awhile. Public relations, knowing your people, and knowing your games are most important. All customers want to win, of course, but they also want to have a good time, and good p.r. is what brings people back to your place. I've had thousands of people over the last forty years say, "I'd rather play at Harolds or even at the Sundowner and lose my money than go somewhere less friendly and win," which is not a smart statement by any means! But they really mean it. They come to have fun, and to be ha rassed or intimidated is very uncalled for. People are going to win, and as long as it's legitimate, you got to pat them on the back and wish them good luck; that's what builds customers for tomorrow. You always got to build for tomorrow.

When Harolds Club was running, it was always for the customer. Pappy was excellent. Even when Pappy used to double the bets, there would be people take advantage of him; but he didn't let that stop him from doing it. I mean, why take it out on everyone because a few were taking advantage? He did that all the years I was there.

You can't be rude . . . running them out, cussing at them because they're winning, throwing pennies under the table or other old superstitions that these old bosses had. Competition is so great today that you've got to take care of all

the people. In fact, I think you have to give them more today than you ever did, more room comps, more comp food. Customers they get spoiled.

When I started on the floor, supervisors didn't buy drinks for customers; they had to buy their own. One time on the dime table a guy had to break a $100 bill to buy a drink, and I thought, "Well, that's weird." But that was the way it was. Then they started comping cocktails on the high limit table, and pretty soon all players got free drinks.

And we always had pretty free rein to buy food for the customers. We had comp meal tickets, and we'd just sign them. In fact, I keep running across this guy who is a big dice player at the Silver Legacy, and he still has a comp dinner ticket from Harolds Club that I give him thirty years ago.

The Smiths used to say they'd lose a million dollars a year in their restaurant giving away food. One time friendly, loveable Lou Cardella a dice dealer was the only person in Harolds Club that could give out food comps for about a week. I think Pappy had gotten mad at everybody and said, "Well, we'll only let Lou do it." Back then it was so different. In this day and age, your food almost has to make money, your bars, everything. Years ago, the booze was free and the food was free, and they figured, "Well, we make enough in the slots and pit to cover it." But now, in this day and age with everything so expensive and with a lot more accountants than there used to be, they have computerized rating systems that make sure people play enough to "earn" comps.

Harolds Club, of course, didn't have any rooms to comp, but the shift managers Chuck Webster, Don McDonnel, and them could comp some rooms over at Harrah's. Harolds did have a list of good customers from their credit office. They had a lot of good money play there, and we would keep track of how some players were doing. For example, if Nick Sahati bought in $20,000 in cash, we would let the shift boss know if he beat us or if we beat him.

When Pappy Smith died in 1967, the operation started to go downhill. Harold Jr. and Sr. did a good job, but it was different with Pappy gone. Nobody had the type of personality that Pappy did . . . the old carnie just a down to earth guy. You know what he was remembered for more than anything? Doubling the bets. The customers *all* remembered him doubling the bets. A lot of times people would be down to their last forty bucks, and here comes Pappy, and you know he's going to double the bet, so you put the whole thing out there, and you win. And sometimes people would see Pappy coming, and they'd quickly bet more money in anticipation, and he'd just wave and walk by.[laughter] Harold Sr. and Harold Jr. also doubled bets a few times. More frequently, Harold Sr. would go over to the dice table and say, "Hey, pay everybody seven times what they win until they seven out."

Pappy had what he called a "poor bastard" hand. He would go behind the table and deal and then turn everybody's cards up, and he'd hit until he busted and say, "Pay all the poor bastards."

There was another thing he did. [laughter] He would come in on a jammed up dice table, and he'd wind up a toy monkey, and it would run around jumping and clapping on the table. Then he would give everybody a mint candy, tell them a few jokes, and leave. They loved him for it.

Pappy tried all sorts of stuff! Mouse roulette they would bring in mice, and then spin their cage so they would get dizzy, and when they were released, they'd go into a numbered hole on the table. But one mouse would follow the scent of the other one, and pretty soon they're all going in the same hole. It didn't last long.

Pappy used to bring in a lot of bus ses, but he'd let his bus passengers go anywhere in town to gamble. He didn't care. He said, "Fine, the whole town needs them." He knew he would get his fair share, and he wasn't greedy. He tried a lot of things, and it cost him a lot of money to do them, but he did a heck of a job. When Pappy advertised Harolds Club on his road signs all over the world, it was "Harolds Club, Reno, Nevada." So a lot of the time he was publicizing the whole town of Reno.

When Pappy died, nobody knew what was going to happen. We heard rumors for a long time that the club was going to be sold, and then we heard ru mors that Howard Hughes was going to buy it. It was nerve wracking, because you didn't know how long you were go ing to have a job. We were having floor boss meetings, and Darl Voss, who was my shift manager, told us that there would be no changes made. Everyone was under a lot of pressure. Everybody had their homes, and this and that, and we were going along fine, and all of a sudden, "Bango!" Pappy died in 1967, and then they sold the club to Howard Hughes in 1970.



When Hughes finally bought the club, a lot of people thought, "Hey, good." But it really didn't help the town of Reno. Harolds Club went downhill from there, and it never was the same. They brought a lot of people in from Vegas, and after the sale, the club became less friendly to customers and employees alike. The Hughes people brought in Jay Corn as shift manager, and Billy Weir brought guys up from Las Vegas to run the place. They run a completely different business down there it's hard to run a Reno casino that way. The behavior of some of the bosses the new management put in drove cus tomers away and ran the business down. They acted like idiots, and that hurt Harolds Club.

I wasn't used to treating the custom ers like they did being rude to them, nasty, yelling across the pit to change a deck, or cussing people out but you either had to go along with them or get out. I finally came to the conclusion that there was no future at Harolds for a per son like me, who had been there for years. When Jessie Beck opened the Riv erside in June of 1971, I left Harolds Club and went to work for her as a graveyard shift manager. Over a hundred Harolds Club employees went over to Jessie Beck's Riverside when it opened.

9

George Kerr

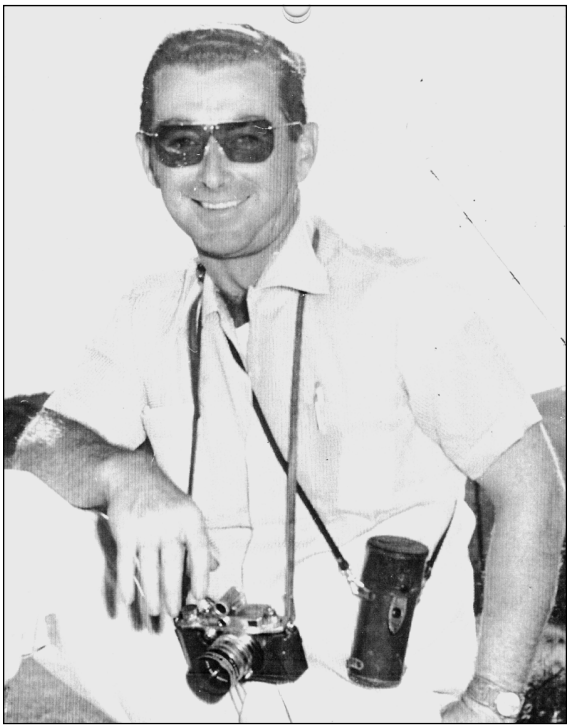
George Kerr was born in San Jose, California, in 1917. After graduating from high school, he attended Catholic University in Washington, D. C. During World War II, Kerr worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad in San Francisco as a freight expert assigned to the navy. He had learned photography, and after the war, he left the railroad to pursue a career as a photogra pher, never dreaming that he would wind up working for the largest gambling casino in Nevada. As he re membered it,

While I was working as a freelance photographer in San Francisco, Harold saw an exhibit of my photo graphs and liked them. He asked me to come over to Reno and work for him, but I had no use for a hick town, which I thought Reno was. I kept refusing . . . until he finally offered me a contract that *nobody* could refuse. I came up in 1956.

I was the first photographer to work for a gaming club. I thought I was pretty good every young man does but I had a great amount to learn. For instance, you didn't photograph couples in a gambling club, because most of them weren't supposed to be coupled; and you didn't photograph people with a drink in their hand or gambling, because, when they got home, that might not be acceptable to their peers. I learned what not to do, but I had no idea what Harold wanted done. He'd just tell me, "Go do your thing."

Harold was a genius at spending money to make money, and he would send me and my helpers any where to do darn near anything. For example, we would go to a convention, and we would find out who was going to photograph it. We'd buy them off, pay them cash they'd shoot the convention for us, and we'd pay them handsomely.

We would get a picture of everybody at the con vention, and we'd carry a tape recorder and a mi crophone to record the identity of each person we shot. We had to be very careful about our numbering of the shots so that later we could match each shot with a name and address recorded on the tape. On the back of the prints, we stamped, "Compliments of



George Kerr. *"I thought I was pretty good—every young man does."*

Harolds Club," and mailed them free to the people who were photographed. So if you went to a convention, you might receive two or three pictures of yourself from Harolds, and when you came to Reno, where would you go?

Another thing Harold did was send a girl out in a station wagon to military bases all around the country. She would show up, contact the public relations officer, get a room where she could sit servicemen in a chair, and take a portrait photo of each man. He'd give her the name and address of someone he wanted to have the photo might be his girlfriend, might be his mother; we didn't care.

She'd send the film back here, and our lab would process it and put it in a little folder that said, "Harolds Club compliments you on (your son, your fiancé, your whatever)," and we'd mail those out. We got an awful lot of requests for more pictures of them, and we did our best to fill them. We got some that said, "That's the last picture that was taken of my son (or this man)." That was sad, but it was good publicity. Really good.

Even though Harold was a drunk, he was a good businessman. He had a great feel for what people liked. He and I read in the newspaper one morning at breakfast that President Kennedy was coming to the nuclear test site in Mercury, Nevada, the following Monday. He said, "Go. We must have some pictures of our president." He loved Kennedy.

I started phoning around, and no way could the Harolds Club photographer get on the test site. (Nobody cared, apparently, about protecting the president from strangers in those days, but atomic energy was a different thing.) Raymond A. Smith was the commander of the Nevada State Civil Air Patrol, so he signed me up as a second lieutenant in the CAP, and I went down there with those credentials. [laughter]

On Sunday I showed up at Nellis Air Force Base and reported to the master sergeant who was running the photo section of the base. He said, "You guys are pretty sharp Kennedy won't be here till Friday." The dear *Nevada State Journal*! [laughter]

I phoned Harold and said, "I'm coming home."

He says, "No, stay there and donate your services to the air force."

The sergeant was glad to see me. He sat on his fat butt while I did all the work for the week.

Many people think that Pappy (Raymond I. Smith) started the club; but if he had, it would've been named Raymond's. Harold started Harolds Club in 1935, and when he first came to Reno, he rented a duplex from my future fa

ther in law, Louie La Voy, a railroad en gineer out of Sparks. The duplex was on Arlington, and Harold and his wife and family lived there. After the first couple of months, Harold couldn't pay the rent. Louie thought that he was an honest man and said that was all right, pay it when he could. When Harold got healthy financially, he moved, but he left all his furniture, because Louie had treated him nicely.

After Harold got his club pretty well organized, Pappy came up to manage it he ran things, and Harold was terrified of him, but Pappy didn't own any part of the club until he bought out Harold's first wife, Dorothy, in the 1960s. Even be fore Pappy owned part of the club, how ever, he had taken over the restaurant and the bars in Harolds, except on the seventh floor. When he became the owner of the restaurant and bars, all the people that worked there were suddenly working for the Raymond I. Smith corpo ration, *not* for Harolds Club.

The seventh floor bar, Harold had to keep, because it was a loser gave away too much in the showroom. The main reason to have a showroom was because you couldn't advertise gaming in a lot of places, including California, but you could advertise a show. It was a very small showroom, but we got all the pub licity we could, and we followed our policy of giving away photographs.

From early on, if you were an em ployee, you belonged either to Harold or to Pappy, and you avoided the people that belonged to the other guy. It was not friendly the Smiths ruined themselves fighting with each other. I was Harold's man, and I always stayed that way. All Pappy ever did was fire me when Harold was away. Then I'd just stay in my lab and fool around until Harold got home and re hired me Pappy would never fire me when Harold was in town.

My contract was with Harold I was paid $50 a week by Harolds Club so I could have Social Security, but the rest of my pay came from Harold personally. My wife, who has handled the money all the time, thinks that Harold probably *gave* me more money than he paid me, because when he gambled and won a lot of money, if he happened to see you on the street, he might give you a thou sand dollars. He gave away tons of money.

The people that worked at Harolds Club had no employment protection at all; it was customary to dismiss people with a telegram, not even a phone call, and that was common in the industry at the time. There was no such thing as union protection or health insurance or any of that, but the Smiths did things like this:

One time Harold called me to his of fice, and he says, "Are you very busy?"

"No."

"Well, I want you to get over to St. Mary's Hospital. Here's a girl's name, she's one of our change girls. She fell on the ice and broke her hip. Find out who her doctor is, go see him, pay him off, and then tell St. Mary's to send us the bill."

I went over and saw Sister Seraphine. The girl was being cared for by Dr. Jim Herz. He said, "He's doing this again, right? Tell him this time I'll split it with him."

So I got back to the club, and Harold sent me out to the girl's apartment. She was a single mother, and her mother was living at her place, taking care of her two children while she was in the hospital. At Harold's instruction, I paid her bills all the time she was off.

I told Harold, "I'm going to tell every body about your generosity."

He said, "You're going to tell no body."

I said, "People in the club have a right to know how well you treat your employ ees."

He said, "Listen, artist, you take the pictures and let me run the club, if you don't mind."

So twenty minutes after the girl came back to work, everybody in the club knew what he had done and that she had only worked for him for three days when she fell down. It spread through the club like wildfire. How much wiser he was to wait until *she* got back to tell the story than to have me tell it!

Harold loved to be the best, and he wanted anything he touched to be the best. I think that the Catholic Church in Reno would not be the way it is, had it not been for the Harold. I'm Catholic, and we'd have something going, and he'd just pour money into it all the Catholic churches and charities, and particularly St. Mary's Hospital.

Of course Harold was also a drunk. I always thought it was because his father pushed him into it, but Harold would go over to St. Mary's to dry out, and they felt sorry for him, treated him nicely, and the relationship slowly built up. Sister Seraphine, who ran St. Mary's, was easily one of the most loveable human beings that ever lived. She got more awards national, state, and local than any body that ever lived in Nevada, and she just charmed everybody. I think if Sister Seraphine had walked into the club and told Harold, "My dear, I need this club," he'd have given it to her and started another one. [laughter] One of the hap piest memories I have is Sister Seraphine telling someone, "This is George. He's one of my boys." Oh, wow!

Harold would have to struggle with his father for everything, and that would devastate him, just *wreck* him. (He didn't really *fight* with his father if he disagreed with him, that was considered to be a major fight.) And Harold was a poor fa ther himself. I know personally that Jun ior went to him one time with a problem, and Harold just handed him a few $100 bills and told him to go out to the Mus tang and play. He didn't do anything for the kid.

Harold's son was named Raymond after Harold's father. When Raymond went in the coast guard after World War II, he found out that Raymond Smith of Reno was nobody, but Harold Smith of Harolds Club was somebody, so he changed his name to Harold Jr. Pappy didn't speak to him for months; he was furious.

The title Harold liked best was "opera tor." He was a club operator, and he felt that an operator had to be unchallen geable. If he said that something should be done, that was it! Otherwise every thing would fall apart. And he was a very *moody* man. One winter he called to gether Roy Powers, Darl Voss, Junior, and me, and he said that we were going to the lake we were going to buy the Cal Neva and the waterfront near it, take the old club down, and put up a new club. It would be for ordinary people; then we'd put up a very exclusive golden key club on the lake shore. He said a big thing in the future would be boating, and he was going to put in a marina. He just said, "We're going to do that."

I couldn't tell the difference between "We are going to" and "I want to." He'd come around and say, "Gee, I want to send you around to photograph the world in our times." And he was telling the truth. He really would like to do that, and I would start making arrangements to be away from home. But it's not say ing, "I am *going* to." I'd make plans, and then he'd tell me we weren't going to do something.

At the lake, Pappy stopped him. He had to come back and tell us we weren't going to do it, and he was crushed. He considered he no longer had any author ity. He was totally destroyed, but he eventually got even:

Harold told me in his office one day, "I have them. They are delivered into my hand."

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He says, "Today I wiped out our op tion to buy the Golden."

I said, "Harrah's will buy it, and you won't have the biggest club in the world anymore."

"I don't care."

"Well, you're out of the business then. You can't run the second biggest."

And he says, "I know."

Pappy wanted the Golden, and Harold had the power to wipe out the deal, so he returned the favor to his fa ther. But Harold's power was only finan cial, and Pappy's was emotional. Harold always referred to Raymond as "my daddy," like he was a little boy.

They had some strange customs in the club. Pappy used to walk around with a guy packing a basket of silver dollars, handing out silver dollars to people.

Harold would come up to a table and say to the dealer, "Are these nice people?"

"Yes, they are."

He'd double all the bets.

They'd double the bets, they'd pass out silver dollars, and on your birthday they'd give you fifty bucks. That was a lot of money in those days. Then Pappy came out one day with the dollar bas ket, and it had maple syrup chocolates in it. He liked those, so he substituted them for the dollars. And instead of giving you fifty dollars at your birthday, they brought you into the restaurant and bought you dinner. That didn't go over quite as well. [laughter]

Pappy is responsible for Highway 80 being a freeway between Truckee and Reno. In 1959 they were getting ready for the Olympics at Squaw Valley, and California planned to have four lanes only as far as Truckee, as far as the Olym pic Games. Pappy used all the juice he had with politicians to get it stretched into Reno, and it worked most of the people that came to the Olympics stayed in Reno. The four lanes between here and Truckee were good sense and, of course, totally helpful to the club and to Reno as a whole. Pappy did many things that were generally helpful to ev erybody.

To photograph the 1960 Winter Olym pics for Harolds Club, I worked my way in through the *Catholic Register*, a news paper in town that was run by Monsignor Leo McFadden, a *big* man in the Catho lic press. I also hooked up with the British team and became the official photog rapher for them, because they didn't have any, and we were offering it free. When I went to present credentials at the gate, the guy asked me what I wanted to do, and I told him I wanted to photo graph everybody there and give the photos to their countries. My Olympic pass cleared me for everything, even the girls' dormitory, so I got to see all the events.

Harold loved music. He was not what you'd call an educated man, but don't talk music with him and try to dominate him, because you'll make a fool of your self in a rush. He knew music; he knew it very well. It was his idea to present classi cal music concerts in Reno, and he finally reached a point where he could afford to do it.

Harold's instrument was the violin, and violinist Ruggiero Ricci was the first performer he hired to give a concert. The venue was Manogue High School's gym. He closed Harolds Club's seventh floor showroom, took all the seats out, and put them in the gym for his 120 special guests to hear the concert. [laughter]

Those were the biggest days of Harold's life. We went down to Sacra mento to hear Madame Lili Pons sing, and we took tuxes . . . Lois, his wife, took a gorgeous gown . . . we stayed at a beautiful place. Nobody had told us that the community concert circuit was first come, first serve, no reserved seats, no body dressed up! [laughter] Madame Pons didn't even have a dressing room she just changed between a couple of filing cabinets that were pushed together behind the stage.

Harold brought Lili Pons up to Reno. At the airport, we had dozens of cam eras, and I had my daughter and my son present her with roses. Madame Pons was sharper than Schwartzkopf, Peerce, Stern, and other stars. They were legiti mate stars, but Madame Pons was a le gitimate personality. She knew at a glance that this was like the old days, when she was at the absolute top of the heap, and she stayed in Reno a week after her concert gambling on Harold's money. [laughter] She never risked any of her own.

We wandered all around town. I spent the week just photographing Ma dame Pons in Reno and in the club. She loved to gamble she played craps; she played twenty one; she had a good time.

Harold presented quite a number of concerts. One of the early ones, he called Roy Powers and me in, and he was just furious. There was an ad in the paper that said, "The Smith family presents a charity concert."



Arriving in Reno to perform at a Manogue concert, Metropolitan Opera star Lili Pons is greeted by Harold Smith Sr. and accepts roses from the children of photographer George Kerr.

He was *frothing* mad. He said, "Nei ther one of you has *any* right to insult me."

"What are you talking about?"

He said, "If I give a charity concert, somebody's going to make some money. *All* the money that comes out of this concert wouldn't be as much as I'm spending on it." He made us change our ad forever on the concerts, which were all paid for out of his own pocket, not Harolds Club.

Roy Powers was head and shoulders above everybody else in publicity and promotions, and I worked for him a great deal. He'd get the ideas, and I'd shoot the pictures. Roy Powers was a total ge nius. His ability and the Smiths' attitude made a great combination, because here was a tremendous ad man with the money behind him to use his talents fully.

He could just do wonderfully great work. Roy is one of not more than five people in town responsible for the Air Races, and he advised the Balloon Races. He also put on the boat races out at Pyramid, but they didn't take. The boat racing people, the people that backed it, didn't cotton to gambling, and it just didn't work out.

Harold would go down to Vegas and go to a casino and establish credit in the cashier's cage for $10,000. He'd play till it was gone, and he'd tip like mad and put on a big show. And the help would say, "Oh, that's Harold Smith of Harolds Club. When you go to Reno, go to Harolds Club."

Later, the Vegas casino might bring $10,000 up here and do the same thing. And we would say, "That's so and so from the Frontier. Don't forget to go there. It's a wonderful place." That was just swapping money back and forth.

Harold asked me one time if I wanted to go along with him. I said, "Sure." So he gave me $10,000. I don't know if you gamble if you do in this state, you're an idiot but it's not hard to lose, and it's very hard to win. I'd go to one club, and he'd go to another . . . you'd have to work like mad. We couldn't make stupid bets you had to stay away from the horn and all that; you had to act like you knew how to play craps. (And I've never seen a better explanation of craps than there is in Harold's book, *I Want to Quit Winners.*)

Harolds Club became legendary everywhere. Some of the things we did I'd travel with Harold quite a bit, and we would just *load* ourselves down with silver dollars. We'd take them in our suitcases and fill our pockets when we left the hotel each morning, so that in other cities Oh, take New York. We always stayed in the Sherry Netherlands Hotel, and we'd pay at the bar with silver dollars. We'd buy the bar a drink, and they had *big* bars. [laughter] The bartender would call in the supervisor *always* and he'd put those silver dollars away and pay the amount of money out of his pocket into the cash register. People would just go *crazy* for silver dollars.

One weekend some kid from Camp Pendleton went home with $14,000. The next weekend our club looked like a substation of the Marine Corps. *Everybody* was there. A floor boss told Harold that he was worried the kids were spending too much money and wouldn't have enough to get back home. So Harold got a bunch of busses and sent them home.

Well, that was the port party. The next week we had the starboard party. Harold was just horrified, so he passed out all the black chips we had. The black chips were free play chips, worth $1 each. If you lost them, you lost them; if you won, they paid you real money for them. Later he sent a crew of people down to Pendleton to demonstrate for the troops why they couldn't win in a gaming club. It cost a fortune to send the tables, the dealers, and everything down there, but that was the right thing to do, so they did it.

If you had any event going that could benefit, the Smiths were in. We got a new Catholic bishop here, and they sent me to him to tell him that anything the church wanted photographed locally, I'd do it. Later the bishop called me in and told me that he'd like me to go to Vegas to cover the Catholic women's national convention, and he would like a picture of each Catholic church in the state. I said that was a little outside my offer I would have to discuss it with Mr. Smith.

I went to see Harold, and he just chewed me like I was tobacco. Oh God, he was mad! "A prince of the church . . . !"

I said, "He's not a prince of the church."

"A prince of the church is decent enough to ask us to do some damn thing, and you tell him to go stand in the cor ner till you talk to a gambler. You son of a bitch!" [laughter]

I said, "All right, I'll phone him and tell him."

"No, you won't. You go *back* and tell him."

I had to go back and say, "Yes, we'll be glad to do it."

So in 1958 I toured this state. I drove 8,000 miles, and just before I left, Harold told me that I couldn't do that in my car. I said, "Well, I sure as hell can't fly. I'm going to photograph every place that Mass has ever been said, and that's a lot of desert."

He said, "Take my Cadillac. I don't want you wrecking your car." So I made the tour in what was very rare in those days for a car it had air conditioning and cruise a matic.

Everywhere I'd go, if they had a pho tographer, I'd hook up with him and tell him what I was doing that I was not coming into town and stealing his busi ness; that I had just one thing to do. In Ely, Irwin Fair was working very hard with a group of people to get a national park going at Mt. Wheeler. I phoned Harold and told him what they were doing.

"Stay there and work with them."

I said, "Remember, they're 400 miles from your club."

He says, "Who cares. If we get a na tional park out there, we'll get some of the trade." I worked with them for two weeks and left all my negatives there.

I photographed a church in Battle Mountain. Father Paul Meineke was there at the time. (He was the man with a peg leg who was murdered up in Virginia City later on.) I went to Mass on a Sunday morning in Battle Mountain, and after wards I went back to see Paul. A kid came in with the collection plate and poured the contribution out on a desk. Then I did something that very few men can say they've ever done: I *doubled* the collection out of my own pocket with a buck and some cents.

Paul asked me, "George, is that your money or Harold's?" Because everybody knew that if I toked them heavily, that was from Harold, not me. I was instructed to act like I was carrying Harold's money. We would go somewhere, and if I'd toke somebody a dollar, Harold would tell me what a damn cheapskate I was. "Toke them ten dollars," he would say, which was unheard of in those days.

Harold had a lot of peculiarities, not the least of which was his intolerance of tardiness. If you had an appointment with him, and you were five minutes early, he would be ready for you; but if you were one minute late, he would not see you. All the time I worked for him, I kept my watch ten minutes fast. I was never late.

We went to San Francisco one time to see a man he was going to hire to do some reupholstering in the club. We had an appointment with him at 6:00 at the Elks Club, so we went there, went to the bar, had a drink, and Harold suddenly looks at me and says, "That's it. Let's go." It was five minutes after six.

As we got out front, this guy was just arriving by cab. He rushes up and says, "Hi, Harold."

"Hi, how you doing?"

"Oh, fine. I'm glad to see you."

Harold says, "Yes. Goodbye." And we got in the cab the guy had just exited and we left. Harold just says, "Go." [laughter] We went, and he says, "Where

you want to eat?" We went to dinner alone, and the guy didn't get the job.

There were other things If a male employee in the club grew a mustache or a beard, he'd be fired. If a girl wore flop heel shoes or tight slacks, she'd be told not to. You couldn't chew gum, but they had a girl that went around and passed out free cigarettes, your brand, and you could have a drink anywhere and be all right.

My job had many facets, and one of them was to entertain the press. Their boss would phone to tell me they were coming to Reno, and I would scoop them up and give them all kinds of freebies coupons for free meals and drinks and so forth. That was considered normal, and anybody that was in the press when Harolds Club was operating will tell you about the press parties. They were ca tered by Swede Matheson, who was the best. They were held on the seventh floor, mostly in the afternoon.

Another thing I helped on was publi cizing our entertainers. Entertainment was a new field for casinos, and nobody in the club really knew what it was all about. We hired Helen Forest as our first star, and opening night she was so drunk she couldn't stand up, much less enter tain. A group called the Jodimars were the second act, and they had to fill in her time as well as their own. They did it very well, so Harold started advertising, "Harolds Club The Home of the Jodimars." He gave them a contract to come back the next year, but the only one who signed it was their leader. He brought back a bunch of slobs with dirty fingernails, a nothing act, but we had to pay them anyway.

I had 620 picture frames around the club to keep filled. There were maybe 150 that were never changed politi cians, governors, the Smiths, et cetera. The others were everybody and every thing except employees. On the third floor, which was a restaurant, we would put photos of sports, horses, things that kids would like keep them quiet while they waited to get in the restaurant. On other floors we might have things we had done for the St. Mary's Guild or the Women's League at Washoe anything that was on around the town. A lot of the photos were of ordinary towns people, and if you wanted one, you just opened up the top of the frame, took it out, and it's yours.

Roy told me one time he needed a "happy picture" of Pappy right now. So I went up to his office: "Mr. Smith, Roy needs a happy shot of you."

His face became one big thunder cloud. "Are you ready? Do it! It's good for the club!" He never let on to anybody outside the club what a slob he thought I was, or how useless I was, or that no body needs a photographer.

The gun stuff was basically Harold's. Their gun collection . . . that was a tough assignment. I took color pictures of ev erything in the gun collection, and it took me almost a year, because I had other things to do at the same time. It had thou sands of pieces. They bought it from Raymond Stagg, a man who had it in his bar over on Lake Street, where he exhib ited it better than the Smiths did after they got it they didn't have room for the whole thing.

It was always a big argument among the experts as to which was the better gun collection the U.S. Marines' at Quantico or ours. It fascinated me; there was everything in there. (The wickedest personal weapon I ever saw was in the collection a set of brass knuckles, and inside them was a spring operated six



A very small part of the Harolds Club gun collection. *"They didn't have room for the whole thing."*

inch blade and a rotary magazine with five shots in it. It fired right out of the magazine!

With the guns and western memora bilia and everything, the Smiths decided that we would have a Western theme, and everybody in the club would wear Western clothes. (The photo department wore a black Western outfit with white trim.) They set up a clothing warehouse where you could pick up your outfit. The clothes were just dirt cheap you could have a dozen shirts without any real ex penditure. They also wanted you to wear Western boots, but I couldn't because of a foot condition, so I wore English riding boots, the kind that just come up to your ankle.

Raymond A. Smith handled the club's money. He was a nice, quiet man. He sponsored chess tourneys, and he was the commanding officer of the Nevada Civil Air Patrol. Once he had all the colo nels in command of all the states' CAPs come to Reno he paid for it and he entertained them for a week. I had to photograph every damn one of them.

Ray asked me if his friends could have extra pictures of themselves, and I said, "Sure," because we gave away tons of them. One of the guys told me he wanted fifty 8 x 10s, and I thought that was a little pushy, but he got them free.

I also had the pencil privilege. If you had the pencil privilege, you could sign somebody's bar tab, and their drink was

free. Most pencil privileges were just good at the bars, but mine was good at the restaurant as well.

Pappy encouraged snitching on people, but Harold hated that. If you went to Harold and tattled on someone, you were through. You "weren't a man."

I did my best to learn about gaming, and I got to be a pretty good protection man, watching the tables and looking for people cheating. But if I saw a dealer stealing, I would not tell Harold, I'd tell Jim Hunter. Jim was the manager of the club, directly under the Smith family. A tall, personable man, he was known as "high pockets."



Entertainer Carmen Cavallaro with dealer Irma Cotter (left) and an unidentified employee (right), c. 1960. When the club adopted Western wear for its employees, cocktail waitresses might choose an outfit like the one on the right, but dealers' outfits were generally a bit less revealing. Pistols were not part of the look.

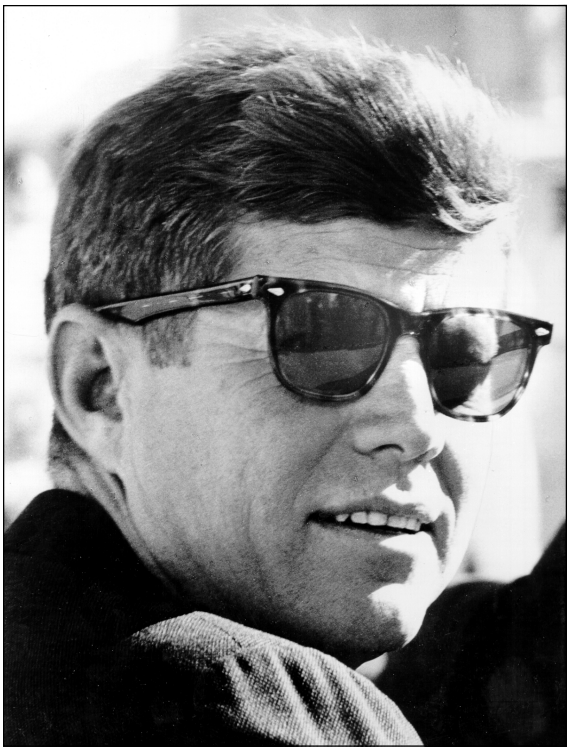
When the Smiths sold Harolds Club, the Hughes people sent a guy to my lab to get an inventory of what they owned. Well, they didn't own anything it was all mine. I told this guy so, and he called me a liar, so I said I'd break his mouth if he didn't get his ass out of there and keep it out. I told him to put any demand he had in writing, and I would respond. He did, and I did, and he came back and said, "This is silly. Why the hell should they buy you enlargers?"

I said, "Because they're the Smiths. That's why they bought me my enlarg ers. And the next voice you'll hear is that of my attorney." Never heard from him again. I kept the lab for myself.

I didn't stay more than a few days after the club was sold. My job just ended, but Harold continued to send me paychecks for six months. I went to see him when he sent me the first one, and he made me tell him how many times we worked overtime and what the aver age was per week over the years. Well, if you looked at it that way, we were slaves! I would say I had worked an average of maybe sixty hours a week. And how much did we produce? No idea; no idea. Tens of thousands of pictures. Among them was my John F. Kennedy picture, probably the most widely circu lated picture of the president ever taken.

I could lecture for half an hour about what's wrong with my Kennedy picture photographically, but Harold liked it. He had me prepare 30 x 36 board mounted prints of that picture and send one to every Democratic senator, congress man, and governor and other mounted prints to the heads of state of different countries, to all the cardinals, the queen.

The pictures all went out in my name, because Harold said it would embarrass the president to be that closely associ ated with a gambler. I got hundreds of



"Probably the most widely circulated picture of the president ever taken."

letters back. Pat Brown, the governor of California, started his letter, "Dear George." I had known Pat when he was the district attorney of San Francisco, but he wasn't the kind of guy to remember any little person. I thought, "That's great. George, huh?" And he went on and on and on. Like most politicians, he just talked too much. The last paragraph of his letter says, "I have put this photograph in my official album." That must be some big damned album!

The picture was taken December 8, 1962, when JFK visited the nuclear test site at Mercury, Nevada. They were work ing on an atomic engine for space, and he was out to see a test run of it. I went down there with my cameras draped around me, and I got over 100 pictures of him. We didn't have what they call a photo opportunity they hadn't stopped and let us really photograph him and he was sitting in a convertible waiting to go to his helicopter when I took a chance and in a very strong voice said, "Mr. Presi dent, if you please" He turned to look over his right shoulder, and I snapped it.

That picture was sent everywhere. We would make them 10,000 at a time. (That's hard to believe, but true.) We would put them out in hundred sheet boxes all over the club help yourself. Somebody in my office was working on that shot for two years after I took it.

10

Dwayne Kling

Dwayne Kling was born in Turlock, California, in 1929. His family had a farm, but the idea of farming for a living never appealed to Dwayne. Instead, he set his sights on becoming a major league baseball player. Awarded an athletic scholarship to St. Mary's College, he earned a bachelor's degree in business education, graduating in 1950. During two summers while attending St. Mary's, Dwayne played semi pro baseball for the Harrah's Club team in Reno, where he was introduced to the gambling business.

After graduation, Dwayne was signed by the New York Yankees and sent to their Class D minor league team in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He was drafted by the U. S. Army in 1951 and played baseball in the army for two years. Following his discharge, he re entered the Yankee farm system, but he never made it to the major leagues. Released by his team in 1954, Dwayne returned to Reno seeking summer employment. His plan was to enroll at San Jose State College in the fall to study for a teaching certificate. However, Fred Smith, a Harolds Club employee who managed the Reno Sparks Pioneers, a semi pro baseball team, per suaded Pappy Smith to hire him so he would stay in Reno and play for the Pioneers. As Dwayne remem bers it,

I started carrying change in Harolds Club in June of 1954 for eleven dollars a shift. I earned a little extra playing semi pro baseball for the Reno Sparks Pio neers, but it was a tough time. I'd work the graveyard shift at Harolds from midnight to 8:00, and on Sundays, when I got off in the morning, I'd go home and sleep for an hour or two and play a ball game that after noon. When we played on Saturday night, I'd get done playing in time to go to work at midnight.

Towards the end of summer, Fred Smith, the man ager of the Pioneers, said, "I'd like you to stay around until the end of September and finish the season with us."

I said, "I have to get back to school."

He said, "Why don't you go to the University of Nevada?"

So I kept my job on graveyard and went to school during the daytime, but I only took five or six credits. I

never did accumulate enough to get my teaching credential.

For many years, Harolds Club didn't hire anyone that had worked anywhere else. They broke in all their own dealers, and the turnover rate was so low that they didn't have to go out looking. I de cided I wanted to learn how to deal dice. I would go in an hour or so before work and get permission from a floor manager and the dealers to go on their table and practice. When I'd get breaks during my shift, I would practice on the tables; and sometimes, if I wasn't going to school that day, I'd practice for an hour or two in the morning when I got off work. I spent about eight or nine months learning to deal on my own time.

I got to be a pretty good dealer, but there were no openings. These days, crap dealers come and go so fast you can't keep track of them, but there was never an opening for me, and that shows what a good job dealing at Harolds Club was back then. I was just sitting there on graveyard with absolutely no openings.

After about a year, I was a key man working in the slot department for four teen dollars a day, and my wife Eugenia and I had had a baby daughter, Connie. I wanted to get off the graveyard shift, so I asked the shift manager, and he worked it out. In a week or two, I was as signed to swing shift as a key man.

When I came on swing shift (this was typical of Harolds Club), nobody knew I was coming. I walked in and said, "Here I am." They didn't know what to do with me. [laughter] The shift manager's name was Don McDonnell, and he said, "Well, would you like to learn how to deal dice?"

"Yes. I've been practicing it for eight or nine months."

He said, "Let's go down to the dime table." That was every dice dealer's first job assignment, the dime table. There were no dime chips in those days we dealt actual dimes.

They put me on the table, and after they had watched me about five min utes, the dealers told Don, "This guy knows how to deal already."

He came down and watched, and he said, "Oh, that's good. Well, you don't have to be a key man. We'll just start you dealing on the dime table."

I started dealing on the dime table in Harolds Club on Memorial Day weekend of 1955. I went to work at sixteen dollars a day plus tips, but the tips weren't much. If you made a dollar a day in tips on the dime table, that was a big day.

One night I was dealing the game when this well dressed fellow comes to the dice table. He must have had twenty dollars worth of dimes, and he starts play ing the back line. He would bet three or four dimes, and when he went behind the number, he would always take full double odds which, on a four and ten, means you're betting four times your original flat bet. So I'd wind up with ten, twelve, or sixteen dimes stacked back there as odds.

I hadn't been dealing very long, and I was nervous, and I knocked the stacks of dimes over a couple of times. The guy started screaming at me, "Don't you know how to deal?" And blah, blah, blah. I said something back, and it really triggered him. He picked up a big hand ful of dimes he's only about two feet away from me and he threw them at me!

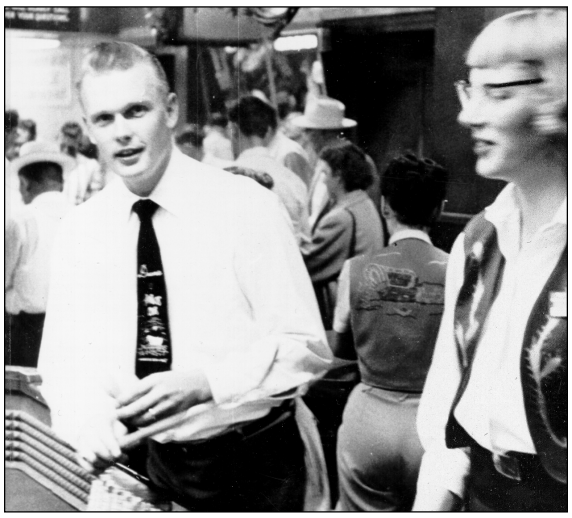
Behind me was the back bar, where all the out of work people, the people with no money, and the hustlers hung out. Those dimes went bouncing and roll ing all over the back bar, and the bums were jumping and running, trying to pick them off the floor. It was really a sight. [laughter]

The guy yelled, "I don't need the money. I'm just trying to establish a new

system of betting the back line." Then he stomped out. One of the floor managers told me the customer was Joe Conforte, who was then running a little whorehouse out at Wadsworth.

That was my first experience with Conforte, but I ran into him several other times before my gaming career was over, and he seemed to be a pretty nice guy. He did some good things. Years later, in the late 1960s, Harolds Club would bus in disabled veterans from hospitals in San Francisco to gamble and have a good time. They were all people with an arm or a leg missing, or maybe both legs missing they were in wheel chairs, and they were crippled. Joe Conforte would always take that busload of veterans out to the Mustang Ranch, his big brothel on the edge of town, and he would furnish girls for them for free. I thought that was gracious. [laughter]

After working on the dime table for about month, I went to the twenty five cent table, and I worked there for about three months with a girl named Fran Sheehan. In those days, Harolds Club always tried to see that a man and a woman were teamed together on the dice table. The theory was that a woman on the dice table was good for business.



Dwayne Kling partnered with Fran Sheehan on the twenty-five cent dice table, 1955.

One night Harold Smith Sr. played on my table. Now if you own a casino, you can't gamble in it, but in those days you could. Harold played on my end of our table for probably an hour, and he gave me a lot of action, but he never bet over five dollars. He was playing to see what kind of dealer I was, more than anything else. He did it to a lot of dealers as they were breaking in, to see if they were qualified to move to a higher limit table.

When you were moved to a higher limit table, the pay was the same, but the tips were much better. If you made two or three dollars a night on the quarter table, that was a good night, but dealers on the dollar tables, the regular high limit tables, were making maybe twenty five or fifty dollars on a good day.

Usually, if you dealt dice, you were on a dice table all the time. The twenty one dealers made a lot more money in tips, so if a woman dealt dice, it was no favor to her, but most of them liked the game. Some of the women dice dealers were a little rougher type of person than the twenty one dealers. Of course, dice, even to this day, is more of a masculine game than a feminine game, and some women enjoyed that. Sometimes, after awhile, a certain portion of them would complain and say, "You know, those twenty one dealers are making all the money. I want to learn to deal twenty one, too." I never knew of anyone being turned down.

I first started at Harolds in 1954, and the last year I worked there was 1970. During that time frame the twenty one game became much more popular, and the crap tables lost a lot of their popularity. At one time there were fifteen crap tables in Harolds Club, but when the club was sold to Summa Corporation, I doubt

there were more than eight dice tables. I think the shift in popularity was because a customer has to have a lot more money to start shooting craps than he does to start playing twenty one. A $20 bill can go a long way on a twenty one table, but on a dice table, a $20 bill barely gets you started.

The large majority of dealers in Harolds Club were honest, but not all of them. There was one period when a lady named Winnie Gribble and I were dealing Number 1 dice, and the dealers on the Number 2 table behind us were caught stealing. When a player would make a bet on an eleven, for example, they would pay the eleven, whether the eleven rolled or not. Or if they had a bet put up for them on the hard eight, if the bet lost, they would not take it down they would let it stay up until it hit. Sometimes they would make bets for themselves, saying that the customer had bet for them. They would put a dollar on the hard eight or something and say, "Thank you very much," and there was really no one putting it up, except themselves.

Pappy Smith didn't use the word craps; he called them dice tables, and Harolds Club had fifteen of them at that time. One was a dime table and one a quarter table, and these were used mainly to break in new dealers. The rest of the games were $1 to $200, or $1 to $500. In 1955 they put in one table (on the seventh floor)that was $5 to $1,000, but most of the tables in the club were $1 to $200 with double odds.

There was a lot of competition among dealers in those days, and they would continually try to better themselves. Dealers used to watch other dealers. They'd say, "Ken Adams is dealing at the Cal Neva, and he's really good. You ought to go see how he pays his come bets off and on," or "He has a way of figuring a horn bet that you should go check on." Twenty one dealers did this, too. You took a lot of pride in your work.

Two of the biggest dice players in the Reno Lake Tahoe area were the Sahati brothers, Nick and Eddie. Eddie died about 1953, but Nick Sahati played heavy in Harrah's and Harolds on into the 1960s. In 1956, every Friday night for several months, Nick Sahati would come in and play on my dice table. My partner was Winnie Gribble, and every Friday, regular as clockwork, Nick Sahati would come in, and he'd beat us consistently. It seemed like he would win anywhere from $10,000 to $25,000 every time he played.

The club finally split up Winnie and me, because we lost so much money to Nick. They left Winnie on Number 1 dice, because she had been there a long time, and she had juice. She said, "I've been on this table for a long time, and I'm not going to move." They scheduled me to work people's days off on other tables, and I never had a regularly scheduled table again.

One of my shifts on my new schedule was to run breaks on the high limit dice table on the seventh floor. This was a $5 to $500 table, and they had put two of their older, experienced dealers on it. I felt honored that I got to work their days off on that table, and I also got to work relief on it and a table on the second floor.

Relief dealers would relieve two people on one dice table and two on another table. Same way on twenty one games the relief dealer relieved four twenty one dealers. So, as a relief dealer, you worked one hour and twenty minutes with a twenty minute break; and sometimes, when the dealers were taking lunch breaks, relief dealers would work two hours without a break. Of course, this was good for the house, be

cause it cut the payroll. However, Harolds Club dealers kept their own tokes, so if you had to be there eight hours, and you were working six and a half out of those eight, you were making that much more money in tokes. Relief dealers didn't complain too much.

I left Harolds Club in November of 1956. Eugenia and I had divorced in August, and, as often happens with casino workers around town, I was drinking too much and gambling more than I should have. One day I came to the conclusion that I should get with it get out of the gaming business and put my education to use.

I quit my job at Harolds and moved to Modesto, California, where I stayed with my brother and got on with some people he knew who were starting a grocery chain. But that situation didn't work out, and I was soon back in a casino this time dealing dice on graveyard in the Harrah's Lake Tahoe Club. I eventually worked my way up to become a pit manager. Then things went awry. Eugenia and I had remarried, and we divorced again, and I started going out with different girls, and I wasn't comfortable doing that in the community where she and our daughters lived I was feeling overworked and burned out in my job, anyway, so I quit and moved down to Reno.

My second time around at Harolds Club, I went to work dealing dice on the graveyard shift for twenty dollars a day in December of 1963. I dealt for a year, and during that time, there were a lot of nights when I didn't make a dollar in tips. During December, January, and February, there wasn't that much business in the club, and if there was business, a lot of times you were on a dead game. In those days you kept your own tokes, but on the crap table, a toke was when some customer made a bet for you then you had to win the bet, so it wasn't easy.

At that time, except for floor men and shift managers, Harolds Club employees had to wear Western clothes cowboy boots and Western pants and a Western type shirt. You also wore either a Western tie or what I always wore, a bolo tie. The club had a wardrobe store where you could buy anything Western very reasonably, but you didn't have to buy your clothes there. You were welcome to go to Parker's or anywhere else and spend a lot more money for fancy Western clothes; and a lot of the dealers did, especially the women.

I dealt on graveyard for a year, and then I was promoted to floor man. The floor men in Harolds Club wore identical gray suits, with a white shirt and a black tie kind of a uniform. The shift manager wore a dark black or a dark navy blue suit, and the floor men wore the gray suits. I learned of my promotion when Harold Smith Jr. called me in to the office and said, "Steve Tarn makes all our suits. This morning, when you get off work, I want you to go down to his tailor shop and tell him to measure you for a gray suit." That was how he told me I was going on the floor.

The floor men were given two suits every year, and we bought our own shirts and ties. After a year or two of wearing those gray suits, some of the floor men rebelled and started wearing flowered ties or different colored ties, and they let us do that after awhile, but the first standard regimen was black tie only. [laughter]

Harolds Club and most casinos that had more than one dice table would try to locate them back to back. That way, if you had one dice game going, and the dice cooled off a little, the custom



Dwayne Kling, 1968. *"We bought our own shirts and ties. After a year or two, some of the floor men rebelled"*

ers could turn around and fall into an other game.

There would be some twenty one tables grouped together, and there might be two dice tables back to back, but Harolds Club operated without a pit. Most of the tables were scattered almost indiscriminately around the building, so supervisors were called floor men rather than pit managers. As a floor man, you worked right out in those masses of people. On big weekends and on sum mer nights, you were right out in that mob, and it was physically tiring just get ting around in the crowd.

Harolds Club had a very relaxed su pervisory arrangement, with the fewest floor men of any casino. When I went on the floor in 1963, we had thirty eight to forty four table games on the first floor, and those tables were covered by just two floor men. The floor men couldn't do much except make fills and settle dis putes they couldn't spend much time watching the game. There would also be two floor men on the second floor, and, when the seventh floor was open for gaming, you'd have one person there.

On the floor beneath every table in the club, there were two buttons: one for signaling floor managers, and the other to summon cocktail waitresses or keno runners. They were connected to signal ing bells and to boards with correspond ing table numbers that would light up. When a dealer pushed the floor man's button, the table number would light up white; for a cocktail waitress, it would light up red.

Whenever anyone bet $100, the dealer had to step on the floor manager's button and give the bell a short ring. (It had a harsh, telephone ring ing sound.) A very short ring could also mean that they were getting low on money, and the floor man should come check to see if they needed any money. As a floor man supervising twenty two games, you were mainly answering bells, because one was almost always ringing.

If a dealer rang the bell for several seconds, that meant that there was big trouble on the table a fight, or a cus tomer dispute, or a major problem. Then all the floor men, the shift manager, the security guards everyone would hone in on that table to see what the problem was.

The button they stood on when they wanted a cocktail waitress rang a bell that made a more pleasant sound. If they wanted a keno runner, they hit the cock tail waitress bell twice.

During the time that I was on the floor, which was from 1963 to 1971, each shift had its own crew. You would work four months on one shift, then move to an other four months graveyard, four

months day, four months swing, and so on. About two years after I went on the floor, they came up with the idea that you would work a year on a shift, and at the end of that year, you would go on to another shift. Graveyard, of course, had a few less floor men than the others, but as a general rule, the entire shift would move at the end of a year.

I was with the same crew from 1964 until I left in 1971. Our shift manager was a fellow named Charles "Chuck" Webster. He had come out of North Da kota and gone to work in Harolds Club in 1937 or 1938. Chuck was one of the most popular floor men that ever worked at Harolds Club. He believed in giving everyone at least two chances, and if a dealer came into work late or drunk, or did something else out of line, he would give him another chance. I didn't mess up with Chuck, but I believed in his phi losophy.

Chuck taught me by example how important it was to keep your employ ees happy. He would bend over back wards to make sure that employees got the days off they liked; he tried to give them the tables they liked; and he would give them the vacation time that they wanted. He was a firm believer in "A happy employee is a good employee."

Card counting was starting to be come more prevalent around 1963 64, but the older floor men didn't initially believe that it was possible for card counters to beat the game. They thought it was just a phase, and they couldn't see why everybody was all in an uproar about it. That changed, and we took measures to stop it.

One of the most extreme ways to pre vent card counting was shuffling after every hand, but that proved to be coun terproductive Harrah's tried it briefly in 1964, leading to a mass exodus of cus tomers. Harolds Club was located right across the alley from Harrah's, and you could just see people coming through that back door from Harrah's into Harolds. They were all complaining about how you couldn't even sit down and play twenty one. Our business briefly in creased tremendously, but Harrah's Club did away with that program after two or three days when they realized that they were running everyone out of the club.

I met my wife, Rose, at Harolds Club when she was dealing twenty one. She had started in 1965 like just about every one else, carrying change. Soon she was offered the opportunity to deal. In those days they would start learning to deal by racking checks on a roulette wheel. One reason was to see how they handled working with customers. A few would become roulette dealers, but most didn't want to, because roulette has never been a moneymaker as far as tokes are concerned.

After check racking, most of the girls breaking in would deal a twenty five cent table. In the 1960s Harolds Club had three twenty five cent tables, and that's where the break in dealers learned. On weekends, they would raise the minimum to a dollar on all except one table. There was always at least one twenty five cent table in Harolds Club until Hughes came in.

Rose and I were married on Novem ber 26, 1967. I was working the graveyard shift, and Rose was working swing. The day we got married, I got off work at 10:00 in the morning, and Rose had got ten off at 2:00 in the morning. We were married about noon or 1:00 that after noon.

My two daughters from my first mar riage, Michelle and Connie, were living at Lake Tahoe at the time, and they came down to Reno on a bus to go to the wedding. After the wedding we

drove to Lake Tahoe and dropped them off at their mother's house. Then we were going to try and drive to San Francisco, but I hadn't slept for about twenty hours, so we stopped in Rancho Cordova and spent the night there. You work different shifts like that in the casino business; it's a different life.

Harolds Club had company bowling teams. Some teams would be composed of floor managers and dealers there was no line of demarcation between dealers and supervisors. We'd get off work and go to one of those bowling leagues and bowl and visit.

Another thing that Harolds Club em ployees would do was go out to Pyra mid Lake. A group of people would set up trailers out there and leave them there all summer. On their days off, they would drive out there. Some of them would actually commute between Pyramid Lake and Harolds Club, do a lot of wa ter skiing, boat riding, barbecuing, and a lot of beer drinking.

At Harolds Club, people were almost happy to go to work. Rose is a very gre garious person, and she would look for ward to seeing Sally or Bonnie or Mary. It wasn't like, "Gee, I've got to go to work, and it's a drudge." It was almost like a party to go to work in a way.

My years at Harolds Club were prob ably the happiest of my life. It was a very relaxed working environment with no pressure situations. Very seldom did you hear of a floor man or shift manager complaining about somebody winning some money. Even if a dealer or a shift lost a great deal of money, you never heard about it management was truly happy when some players won. In other clubs, you have to win a certain amount of money or pit bosses get upset.

Also, Harolds Club wasn't concerned about wages, and they would schedule as many as ten to fifteen people extra every night. An extra covered for some one that didn't show up or for somebody that came in and got sick. If there was no place for an extra to deal, he would just sit in the recreation room all night and get paid, or, after an hour or two, the shift manager would come around and say, "Why don't you give a few extra breaks?" (In those days we called them smoke breaks.) In the short term, this practice, which was unique among clubs in Reno, probably cost Harolds Club lots of money in payroll, but in the long run it generated a tremendous loyalty to the club.

Hundreds of times I've seen a Smith or a shift manager go up to a customer and say, "You know, you're quite a bit ahead now. You should quit while you still have some money. Don't stay too long, or you're going to lose it all back." They knew you'd come back and play again, and when you did, you would probably lose. And if you didn't lose, someone else would.

Pappy was a great believer in Dale Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People,* and when you were hired at Harolds Club, you were given a copy of it. And in the break room, he made available a drink made of brown sugar and vinegar. This was supposed to be the most healthful drink in the world, and he encouraged everyone to drink it.

Pappy used word association to re member people's names. One time a girl named Barbara Maxwell and I were dealing a dice table, and he came be hind the table preliminary to doubling the bets. He asked us our names, and then he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like you to meet Dwayne Kling and Barbara

Maxwell," then he went into his little spiel. Before he left our table, he told me, "I'll remember your name by associating Kling with peaches." And to Barbara he said, "I'll remember your name by associating Maxwell with coffee." So the next time he comes behind our table, he introduces us as Dwayne Bartlett and Barbara Sanborn! (Bartlett pears and Chase & Sanborn coffee.) [laughter] People will still call me "Dwayne Bartlett" as a joke.

The Smith family were all very visible in the club. They would come up and talk to customers, and you would hear the customers talking to their friends later, saying, "That's Pappy Smith; he owns this place. That's Harold Smith; he runs this place." It made customers feel important that one of the owners was talking to them.

Harold Sr. was more visible in the evening hours than in the daytime. You couldn't help but see or hear him when he was in the club — he was a very outgoing person, more of a partier than Pappy, and he liked to drink and gamble. Harold was very loquacious. He'd get on the microphone and announce what was going on in the seventh floor Fun Room; he'd announce what was being served as a special that night in the restaurant.

Harold Jr. was cocky and aggressive, and he had the ability to irritate people; but as he grew older he mellowed out, and he became easy to work with. He was also an outgoing person, very flashy, very flamboyant, a classy dresser, loved to gamble, loved to drink, and loved women.

The Smith men all had more than one wife, and they all had more than one girlfriend. They were a fun loving family, and I'm sure their love of fun and gambling and drinking and girls got them in trouble sometimes. They would probably have had a more efficiently run operation if they'd paid a bit more attention to business.

One big difference between Harolds and Harrah's was that Harrah's had management teams, management training, and management seminars, and as the club was expanding, their managers were expanding with it. At Harolds Club, the Smiths, themselves, were actually the general managers and the casino managers — they never put anyone else in charge. Jim Hunter and Dan Orlich were given some management responsibilities and authority, but they were always under the Smith family thumb.

Harolds Club brought gambling out in the open. One way they did this was by bringing women into dealing, which helped make gambling acceptable to the average person. They contributed to the community in many ways, too, and that helped. They showed that gambling casinos didn't have to be run and staffed by sleazy characters — average people worked there. They put a whole new spin on the gaming industry in the way that gambling was presented to the public.

Harolds Club brought women into dealing in the late 1930s. When Dorothy Smith, Harold Sr.'s wife, saw how hard and long the Smith boys were working, she learned to deal so she could come in and give them breaks. This gradually worked into teaching other females to deal. With women dealers, Harolds Club made gambling feel like a safe, acceptable type of entertainment.

There weren't many women that gambled in Reno clubs until the Smith family started bringing in lady dealers. Women would come in to Harolds and play because they felt more comfortable there — female dealers were an antidote



Dorothy Smith, September 1938.

to the old image of the gambler with the eye shade and dark glasses and a bare light bulb pulled down close above the table. The lady dealing that twenty one game would go home and take care of her family when she got off work, or she might go to a PTA meeting, and she might teach Sunday school on Sunday. She was just a plain, average, homebody type of person, and the customers sensed that.

Having women dealers got more ladies playing in the club, but it also brought in a lot of sharpies or crossroaders that figured a lady dealer wasn't very smart. Of course, in the long run, most cheaters wind up losing their money, too. Another thing female dealers did was attract men to come in and play with them and strike up conversations, increasing the volume of play in the casino.

Harolds Club tried to have a woman dealer teamed with a man on each dice table, feeling that a female customer would be less intimidated, more inclined to play, if there was a lady dealer that she could talk to. I think that had a lot to do with building up the dice play in the club.

It was common practice at Harolds for husbands and wives to work on the same shift. The Smith family encouraged families to work there, and they liked it when a man and wife would work together. The only thing they didn't do was let a man and his wife work together on the same dice table.

Some floor men would try to get a relationship going between their wife and a customer. They would lead the customer over to their wife and introduce him to her and sit him down at her table and maybe buy him a drink and give him a meal ticket. They were doing that solely so that the customer would give tokes to their wife.

There was only one restaurant at Harolds, and it was on the third floor. In later years, they opened a prime rib room on the seventh floor. We had two bars on the first floor, three on the second, and one on the seventh. One of the bars on the second floor, the Silver Dollar, was one of Harolds' big advertising features there were almost three thousand silver dollars embedded in clear plastic on the bar. They say that people would occasionally get desperate and try to chip a few of them out! [laughter] Later on they expanded the Silver Dollar Bar and called it the Silver Dollar Lounge. They featured stage entertainment there, a lot of local groups. It was a small lounge with a very small stage, but it was a popular hangout for locals, for employees on their



The Silver Dollar Bar. *"They say that people would occasionally get desperate and try to chip a few of them out!"*

nights off, and for Harold Sr. and Harold Jr.

In the Roaring Camp Room on the second floor, Harolds had probably the greatest gun collection that was ever assembled. The room was named for a club on Lake Street called the Roaring Camp, which had been owned by Raymond Stagg. Over a period of many years, Mr. Stagg had collected Western memorabilia and many different types of Western guns. Pappy Smith bought the Roaring Camp from him and moved the entire collection to Harolds Club in 1950.

Raymond Stagg was always dressed like a Western frontiersman. He had leather jackets with buckskin fringe on them, wore a big cowboy hat, had a long white beard and goatee, and looked kind of like Buffalo Bill Cody. When Pappy bought the collection, he hired Stagg to tour the United States in a cov ered wagon advertising Harolds Club with one of those big "Harolds Club or Bust" slogans on both sides of the cov ered wagon.

During the early morning hours in sum mertime, from around the first of June

until the first of September, Pappy would block off the gaming area in the Roaring Camp Room to allow young children to come in and see the different memorabilia there. It wasn't only firearms it was bows and arrows and Indian artifacts and different types of wagons and surreys and buggies.

The collection was like a museum, but it was really an advertising gimmick. You couldn't advertise gambling, but you could advertise your gun collection, and it was another reason to come to Harolds Club without even mentioning the word gambling, you drew tens of thousands of people in to look at your gun collection. Everybody's theory in those days was that if you got people in the club, sooner or later most of them would gamble.

Since it wasn't legal to advertise gaming, you couldn't say, "We have the loosest slots in town," or "We have friendly dealers." Instead, tying in with their Western theme, Harolds Club would place articles in newspapers about the Old West, and down at the bottom would be "Advertisement paid for by Harolds Club." This, of course, was legal, because gaming wasn't mentioned in any form it was just information about Nevada or the West with Harolds Club's name under it.

Harolds Club didn't have a hotel, but they had two motels, one on the corner of Moana and South Virginia, and one in Sparks on Prater Way near Fourth Street. Both locations were called the Pony Express Motel. They had buses to shuttle customers back and forth between the motels and the club. They also had a big motel giveaway program when you checked into just about any motel in town, you would get a coupon that you could bring to Harolds Club and turn in for such things as a small roll of nickels, a free drink, or a discount on your food.

Harolds Club had a gun club out on the Pyramid Lake Highway. It was used for trap and skeet shooting, but mostly trap shooting. They would open up gaming there during tournaments. At some of the largest shoots, there would be as many as six or eight twenty one games, two dice games, and a roulette table, plus fifty or sixty slot machines.

To be asked to work at the gun club as a dealer or pit boss was quite a compliment, because you had to be completely trusted as far as honesty and loyalty was concerned. You had to have a great personality, and only the tip top dealers and supervisors were asked to go out there. It was a different situation, because you would open the games at about seven o'clock in the morning, and you stayed there until all those games were closed. On an average day, you would work about sixteen hours, and there were occasions when the gambling went on for twenty four hours. Employees would go home and shower and change clothes and come right back out again with only a couple hours of sleep.

I worked out there once as a dealer, and I worked out there several times as the gaming supervisor. On the big shoots we'd have two floor men, but on some of the smaller shoots there would just be one person there. I saw the biggest action that I ever saw in my life at some of those shoots. In those days you could bet seven hands on a twenty one game, and we would have people that would bet $1,000 each on all seven hands. We'd also let them bet $1,000 on the

crap table. We handled a lot of money out there.

Early in 1970, I began hearing rumors that Harolds Club was for sale. The Del Webb Corporation looked at buying it, but failed. It was said that the deal didn't go through because they offered Harolds Club $10 million worth of Del Webb stock, and the Smith family wasn't interested in stock; they were only interested in cash.

The story is that Del Webb and Howard Hughes used to hang out together in Las Vegas, and Webb made the mistake of mentioning that he was negotiating to buy Harolds Club. Howard Hughes then sent his people up to Reno and offered the Smith family $10 million in cash. They took it.

When the Hughes people came in, we thought we were really going to learn from them, but it wasn't long until we found out that they didn't know anything that we didn't know. Within a very short time, I could see that I wasn't going to be happy there. One of the first things they tried to do was form the table games into pits. It was really tough, because Harolds Club had been built by an add on here and an add on there. There was always a pillar in the middle of a room, or a column here, or a support beam going there. So the games were scattered around helter skelter.

I soon had some run ins with the Hughes people. They didn't want employees taking care of the customers or of one another the way we had when the Smiths owned the club, and I could see that I wasn't going to get along with the new management. They had already said that wives couldn't work the same shift as their husbands, which didn't affect Rose and me. Then, shortly before Christmas, they said floor men's wives could not work in Harolds Club, period. If you were a floor man, either you quit, or your wife quit. Rose and I decided it was time for both of us to leave. In February of 1971 I went to work at the Silver Spur, and Rose went to beauty school.

In the end, Harolds Club was sold because its time had passed. It was over. After Pappy died in 1967, there wasn't much leadership. Harold Sr. said he couldn't run the club without Pappy, and, although it's possible that Harold Jr. could have run it, he wasn't trained or experienced his dad and granddad had never allowed him much authority. The whole history of Harolds Club might have been different if Senior had just given it to Junior early on and backed off and let him run it the way he wanted.

11

Les Kofoed

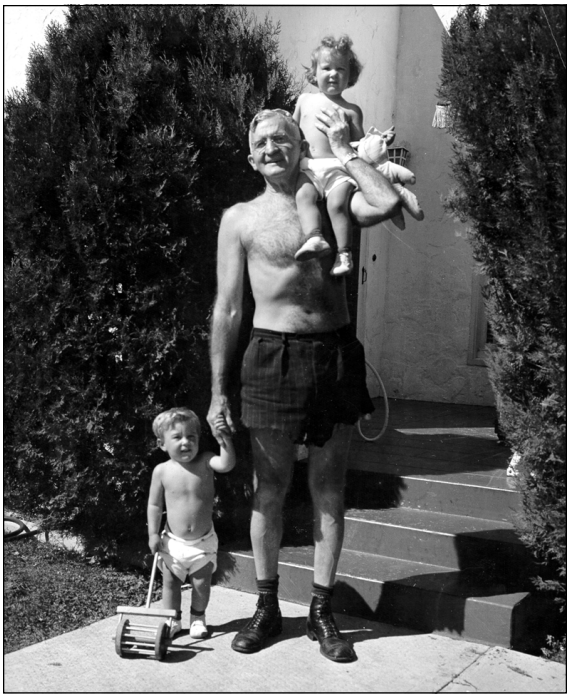
Les Kofoed was born in Lovelock, Nevada, in 1909. After being educated in Lovelock's public schools, he entered the business world and went on to enjoy success in such varied enterprises as construction, motel operation, and ownership of a service station and a truck line. He also served as the state senator from Pershing County in the 1941 Nevada legislature and as U. S. Marshal for Nevada, 1942 1946.

Mr. Kofoed was operating a successful insurance agency in Reno and had become a civic leader when Raymond I. Smith made him an offer that eventually brought him into the gaming industry. As he remem bered his Harolds Club experiences in his 1972 oral history,

There never was a more impulsive group of people to work for than the Smiths, from Raymond I. right down, with the possible exceptions of Raymond A. and Dorothy, Harold's ex wife she thought things out. In some cases, their personal lives might be criticized, their numerous marriages But on the other side of the coin, they always took good care of the ex wife or any children. Impulsive though they were, working for them was gratifying, it was interesting, it was some times frustrating, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

In 1952, I resided at 522 Walker Avenue, and Raymond I. Smith lived right around the corner on Gordon Avenue. The twins had been born by then, and it was not uncommon for Raymond I. to come by our place in his Bermuda shorts, nothing else, tak ing the twins out for a walk. He was hairy as a bear, and very gray, so it was really a sight to see him com ing down the street with the twins. He thought the world of them and spent many hours just walking them around.

About that time, Harolds Club bought the old Cremer Motel on the corner of what is now Rancho Drive and Prater Way, and they were constructing their Pony Express Lodge on the site. One day when Pappy and the twins walked by our place, I got into conver sation with him, and the subject of his new motel came up. I told him that I had built one in Lovelock, later



Raymond I. Smith with his twin children, George and Bettie.

owned it, and sold it in 1944. He was interested and wanted to know what I knew about the motel business.

Mr. Smith was not satisfied with what was going on at the Pony Express site. He said it was going to break him if he didn't get a good manager out there. The job was let on a cost plus basis, with Joe Mastroianni as the general contractor. He in turn had subcontractors in every field plumbing, wiring, roofing, tile, all the others. Pappy told me that they had set out to spend $500,000 out there, and it looked like they'd come closer to $1 million, because they had no control and no supervision over the construction.

I told him that I would look around there must be some competent people who'd be interested in managing the job. In a few days, I got a call from him, and we had a little chat. He asked if I would be interested in taking over the management, and I told him no, that although I would like to operate that kind of an establishment, there's only one way you can run that kind of a place, and that's to live there. He assured me that the motel would have the finest manager's apartment money could buy, and that if I would take the job, my wife and I could select the furniture. The answer was still no.

A few days later Mr. Smith asked to meet with me and my wife Frances, and he made us quite a proposal: a decent salary, plus a percentage of gross room rentals, five percent of the net profit, and, in addition to all of that, he'd put Frances on the payroll with no responsibilities. I took the job.

I went out there on June 1, 1952, and what I saw certainly opened my eyes! The first day on the job, I found three carpenters working on two little thingamajigs out back of the north wing. I introduced myself and asked them what they were doing. They said they were building a couple of doghouses for some floor bosses down at the club. This is typical of the things that were going on. The plumbers'd bring in a load of pipe or fixtures, and the carpenters'd take it home; the carpenters'd order a bunch of supplies, and the plumbers'd take them home. And the electricians would order supplies, and somebody else'd take them home. There was just a continual round of thievery, and it was no wonder that it was costing a lot of money.

Then I found out that the gentleman from whom they'd bought the place had let it be known amongst the suppliers that, "You're dealing with Harolds Club, so you don't have to get the pencil out. Charge whatever you want and a little bit more." It took me a week or so to get to the point where all the purchasing was going through me. If they needed something, they came to me, and I gave them an OK to order it. And then we started

keeping score it's kind of silly to buy 200 shower heads for 100 showers!

At that time Pappy also had a tre mendously large trailer court next door, where many of the boys from Stead Air Base were living. Pappy had a deal where they could rent those trailers for about thirty dollars a month, and they were rather expensive trailers, the best you could buy in those days. If the ser vicemen wanted to buy them after a period of time, every nickel they paid as rent went toward the purchase price. Pappy felt this was one of his contribu tions to the war effort.

The planning for the motel interiors was done by Raymond I.'s wife. She was there daily, and she had her own defi nite ideas about how things were sup posed to be. It was a little embarrassing and uncomfortable at times, because we'd decide on one thing, and then it would be changed without my knowl edge. (We had several heated discus sions, but we got along fine.) It did take a load off my shoulders, having her take care of the drapes and the carpets, and she bought all of the furniture.

Around June 15, we had ten rooms open for occupancy. Since we were the newest and finest motel in the country, it took no time to fill them. The rest of the construction went very smoothly, includ ing the swimming pool (one of the first in the area), and by fall of that year, we were completely open. We held an open house, at which Mr. Smith gave a little speech, and we gave away some sou venirs, and we were in business.

About this time, because of limited parking downtown, Mr. Smith decided to put on some buses between the lodge and the club. Naturally, the cab com panies and everyone interested in trans portation were resistant, because it was competition to them, but after two or three months of bickering, we finally were successful in securing a certificate of "public convenience and necessity for use" between the Pony Express Lodge and the main entrance to Harolds Club.

After some experimentation, we went to a regular schedule of twelve hours, with buses leaving the Pony Express on the hour and leaving from the front of Harolds Club on the half hour. This bus service was a tremendous thing for the Lodge, and it was nothing at all to have an occupancy during the spring, sum mer, and fall months of 102 104 percent. That might sound funny, but in those days, the highways weren't quite as good as they are now, and neither were the cars. People had been warned about this terrific desert between Reno and Salt Lake, and a number of them would drive at night and sleep in the daytime, so there were days when you'd have a chance to rent rooms two times. After about 1956, with the construction of more and more downtown motels, our occupancy dropped off a little, particu larly in the wintertime, but it was still a very profitable business for Harolds Club. It was a profitable operation for me as well.

Pappy wanted the best rooms in town with the lowest price, so we started rent ing rooms at $5 for a double, two per sons. Then I showed him mathematically that we couldn't rent a room for less than $6.20 a day, so he raised the price to $7. We made good money right off, prima rily because of depreciation. We made very good money. Then we later went to $8 and $9, the same as other places, and we always made a good profit from the operation.

Mr. Smith was happy, and, of course, I was happy. However, I'd gone in to the deal with the understanding that there would be other motels built, and that someday I would be sitting in an office just directing the operations of several motel managers. (Mr. Smith had planned

a chain of motels, with locations on all the major highways leading to the Reno area.) This never came to pass, primarily because Mr. Smith came to believe it was necessary to expand Harolds Club instead, and they bought the building where the seven story addition was later built.

The seven story addition was built along the same pattern as the Pony Express Lodge. It was on a cost plus contract, and it started out with the contract being held by a partnership, which consisted of Guy Lent and Joe Mastroianni, the contractor who had built the lodge. However, there was much dissension amongst the subcontractors, and backbiting. The problems became unbearable for Mr. Lent, so he finally sold out to Mastroianni and got completely out of the construction business.

Here again, an addition that was supposed to've cost possibly $300,000 was going to cost in excess of $1 million. Now, no business other than the gambling business could withstand this kind of thing, but that's the way it happened when it was finished, it cost two and a half or three times what it was originally intended to cost. As a result, they were unable to fulfill a promise made to me when they were recruiting me: that, as soon as we were through the first year at the lodge, they would build another 100 units on to it.

This promise had been more attractive than anything else that was offered, because, according to the agreement I had with them, my income went up with the addition of every room. But there was just no way that the club was going to expand that motel, because the Smiths were against borrowing money; and, by the time they had completed the seven story addition and a few other things, such as the Pigeon Hole parking garage, they were in pretty tight financial straits.

Even when financially distressed, the Smiths were very generous to all of their employees, and a bonus of $5,000 at Christmastime was not unusual for many of the top people at the club. In fact, as long as Raymond I. was still alive, there wasn't a bartender that didn't get $1,000 at Christmastime, and my Christmas bonus was never under $5,000. But in the five years I had managed the lodge, I hadn't gotten a single raise, and the outlook for salary advancement wasn't too good.

For advice, I looked to Guy Lent, the assistant general manager of the club. Guy was a businessman in the true sense of the word; the Smiths were not. The Smiths would probably never have been successful in any business other than gaming or the kinds of concession businesses that they had been in. They were extroverts, and certainly promoters, but not really good businessmen. Guy Lent was.

In addition to his other responsibilities, Guy took care of public relations for the club, and he did a masterful job. He offered me the opportunity of coming into the club and taking over their public relations work, and January of 1957, I moved into an office at Harolds Club. During the time when the seven story addition was being added, the offices had been moved temporarily into the old Mapes Building across the alley, and they had found plenty of use for every bit of added square footage in the new addition, so the offices never did get moved back. I was assigned an office on the third floor.

When competition began to pick up downtown, and so many motels were built within walking distance of the downtown core, it was necessary for us to do something to attract business to the Pony Express. We did many things. Starting in

1953 or 1954, we had a program that we called the "Bright Lights Tours." We used to bring in at least 40,000 people annu ally on a package arrangement where the motel room, ground transportation in our limousines, meals, and drinks at the club were all provided. There were many programs such as that one. We had a special program for airline people; we had a special program for a while for people driving their cars to Reno, where they were reimbursed.

Pappy was famous for those things. His mind was working twenty four hours a day. You'd barely get one program started when he'd come up with what he thought was a better idea. One thing I have to say for him: over the years, not all of his ideas were workable, but if he got off on a tangent, he was the first one to know it. I never knew a man who could do a 180 degree turn as rapidly as he could.

Pappy was full of ideas, but some of them simply wouldn't make money. For instance, he had a little slip printed that he called an "It's A Bet." And these "It's A Bet" slips were handed out promiscu ously up and down the West Coast. Pappy would even attend service club meetings and make talks and hand them out they were in various amounts, from $5 to $100. At one time, in a period of maybe sixty days, we had distributed in excess of $350,000 worth of them, prima rily in the Bay Area, but as far north as Portland and Seattle.

These "It's A Bets" were just brought in and laid on the table, and they were considered a bet, just the same as if they were cash. Of course, if the customer lost, he hadn't lost anything. If he won, he was paid off in chips, silver, whatever he de sired.

The success of Harolds Club didn't just happen. It developed primarily because Pappy was working every minute on new ideas to bring more people into the club, or the "Big Bonanza," as he called it. But one of the problems that everyone has is how to keep people in your place of business after you've brought them in. (Reno is so compact in its downtown area that the average visitor feels he hasn't been to Reno unless he's visited all of the clubs and casinos and hotels.) We tried every arrangement you could think of to keep them at Harolds, down to giving them tickets at the Pony Express Lodge that would be good for hourly drawings at Harolds Club. If you were present, and your number was drawn, you were given five dollars.

We tried every conceivable gimmick, and hardly did Pappy ever try a new scheme or promotion that it wasn't picked up by Bill Harrah. I've heard Bill brag that he owed his success to Raymond I. Smith, because all he ever did was copy Raymond I. Smith's ideas, only he did them better, discarding the bad ones and using only the good ones. Mr. Smith was an idea man, no question about it, and he kept everybody around him busy, thinking. It was not uncommon to have the phone ring at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, and he'd run by you some idea that he'd dreamed up during the night.

Mr. Smith's long suit was advertising. He put on quite an extensive advertising campaign for the lodge when it opened, with signs on all four major highways into Reno. And he bought nothing but the best they were baked enamel signs that were good for eight to ten years without any maintenance at all, other than the patching of bullet holes, which was a full time job for a road crew.

There was also a national road sign effort, advertising "Harolds Club or Bust" all over the country. We had at one time two road crews installing and maintain ing the signs, one operating west of the



"We tried every conceivable gimmick" The Pony Express lobby offered slot machines (the woman at front catches a cascade of coins in her skirt) and, as posted on the sign at right, babysitting for $1 an hour.

Mississippi, and one operating east of the Mississippi. They probably contributed not only to the success of the club, but of the motel operation, too, because ev ery highway sign had the picture of the Pony Express rider on it.

Mr. Lent gave me as my first job an analysis of the highway advertising pro gram. Every sign that the club had was on leased property, and a lease main tained, preferably on a three year basis. However, the club had never detailed the exact location of all of the signs. This became my first job: to go through the leases, pinpoint in an atlas exactly where each sign was located, and mark it, cod ing the markings so that we'd know ex actly what type of sign it was. Also, the card indicated the condition of the sign.

This I did, covering al most all of the forty eight states.(We didn't have signs in the New England states in those days they had prohibitions against highway signs.) When I finished that sur vey, we found that we had 2,715 highway signs, by far the largest user of outdoor advertising of anybody in the business, even larger than the companies whose busi ness was nothing but out door advertising.

I gradually got worked more and more into the public relations end of the business, tak ing over the operation of the tours and the San Francisco office. We at that time also had a pro motion representative in Portland, one in Seattle, and one up near the atomic plant out side of the tri cities, in Washington. It was my job to keep those people informed and working, and to supervise the tours.

We soon found it necessary to have an information desk in the club, and one was installed and staffed. Its staff then handled all the details of arriving passen gers. We had many different kinds of tours. We had promotions involving the bus lines, promotions involving all of the airlines that served Reno, as well as pro motions involving people arriving by pri vate car, and supervising these promo tions turned out to be almost a full time job. As the years went by, I also got into the legislative end of the business and was the liaison between the club and the city council, the county commissioners,

the state legislature, and even our own congressional delegates.

Over the years, expansion and improvements on Harolds Club caused some public relations problems. When Harolds had opened the Pigeon Hole parking garage, they had hurt the feelings of people in the parking business. But they didn't go into the parking business because they wanted to: somebody had to make some parking available in that immediate area, and there didn't seem to be anyone else to do it, so Mr. Smith took it upon himself to build the Pigeon Hole parking garage.

When he opened the restaurant, it created an even greater problem, because many of the surrounding restaurant owners felt that this was absolutely unfair, that no casino should be in the food business. Attempts were even made to have legislation passed at the local or state level, which never took place, because I don't think that there would be any kind of a restriction of that nature that would be constitutional.

As a result of that restaurant opening, we were faced with the antagonism of almost all of the downtown restaurant operators. Two or three in particular spent all of their time knocking Harolds Club and condemning Mr. Smith for having gone into the food business. This became my first real grade A public relations chore. I visited with those people, ate in their restaurants, bought them an occasional drink. I reasoned with them that Mr. Smith, as had been the case in the parking situation, had gone into the food business against his better judgment, purely and simply because he had to.

Prior to this time, the Nevada Club, next door, had gone into the food business, making it more and more difficult for us to keep customers in our place. If they felt like a cup of coffee or a sandwich, they left Harolds Club and went into the Nevada Club, and many times they didn't come back. This was an intolerable situation to Mr. Smith, who tried every way in the world to keep them happy within his club, and to keep them as regular customers.

The same when Mr. Smith put in the first bar. He despised liquor; he never drank a drop. When we dedicated the Pony Express Lodge, he did have a mouthful of champagne, but other than that, I never saw him take a drink in all the years that I was around him, and he much preferred that none of his employees drank. But other casinos in town had bars, and if Pappy was to keep his rightful share of customers . . . and I say rightful, because in most cases, he had brought these people to town, or it was because of his club and advertising that they'd come to town. But if they felt like a drink, they'd go next door or across the alley. So actually, he was driven into the bar business.

It's almost impossible for people to believe that the greatest worry in a gaming operation is the dishonesty of the customer. But that is the truth. We found over the years that they'll try any kind of gimmick to beat the house. The feeling seems to be that as long as operating gaming is not a right, but a privilege, any tactics are fair, and every operator is fair game.

Back in those years it was not unlawful to play a slot machine with slugs or foreign coins. The state legislature saw fit finally to outlaw the use of these in a machine, not because they wanted to protect the operator, but because the slot machine take was subject to the gross tax. Every time a customer put in a coin of no value, or a slug, and took out

good United States money, the state of Nevada and the Gaming Commission were losing money.

But slugs and foreign coins weren't the biggest worry with slot machines. In those days, the customers that worried the management in a casino weren't the crossroaders; they weren't the paid people who played the table games; instead, they were the "rhythm" players on the slot machines. And it was hard, almost impossible, to convince the operators that this practice could profitably be learned by almost anyone. The secret of it was to time the pull of the handle in such a manner that you would eventually get the three bars rolling in a particular rhythm. When you had the rhythm down to perfection, you allowed a precise amount of time between dropping the coin and pulling the handle, and you could develop a rhythm that would beat a slot machine, regardless of what the percentage was.

Even in those days, as loose as the laws were, every machine simply had to have a combination that would pay a jackpot, to be legal. The law didn't tell you how many bars you could have on each reel, but you had to have at least one, and it had to be possible for the three bars to line up and pay a jackpot. Well, rhythm play presented some real problems, and particularly in Harolds Club.

When Mr. Smith first went in the business, people wouldn't play slot machines like they do other games for entertainment. They more or less were "piggy banks" in which you put your loose change to buy a roll of nickels or a roll of dollars to stand and play a slot machine was unheard of, because they were simply too tight. Most manufacturers in those days set their machines for a percentage in excess of twenty percent in favor of the house.

Mr. Smith had with him for a lot of years a fellow by the name of George Barnett, who was a self trained engineer and a miserable man to live with. He was a grouchy old reprobate if there ever was one, but he did know engineering. Mr. Smith set him to see what he'd have to do to loosen those machines up so they'd be more acceptable to the players. Barnett went to work. He had people in the slot repair department come up with different symbols and different reels, and (with the help of the factories that manufactured slot machines) he found that through changing the reels, changing the pay out symbols and the pay discs, he could get the machines down to where they paid off pretty well.

Mr. Smith had a few of them put on the floor, and the customers could identify them in nothing flat. They would get constant plays. Customers would stand and play them by the hour, whereas the others, they'd put in two or three coins and walk away. So Mr. Smith pursued this. He kept after Barnett to make them even looser they were still making money.

So Barnett went to work. To test his innovations, he developed a contraption that would actually activate the machine electrically. This was the forerunner, probably, of the electric machines that they have now, but he never had any intention of coming out with an automated slot machine. Instead, it was just to save him the time consuming and tiring job of standing there (or to having someone else stand there), pumping coins into that machine eight hours a day.

In those days, nobody in gaming knew that you could sit down and mathematically determine, to the tenth of a percent, the exact house win percent



"*Barnett went to work.*" The slot machine repair and experimentation shop.

age of any given set of symbols on a slot machine, but they finally got some university professors in on the deal. George Barnett got them to help, and they showed him exactly what combination you had to have on the reels and exactly how the pay out discs had to be drilled to come up with any particular percentage. It's just simple arithmetic: if you have three reels, and there are twenty symbols on each reel, then 8,000 to 1 is the frequency for a jackpot to come up on the old machines with one bar on each reel.

They found, by putting two bars on the first reel and two on the second, that it increased the customer percentage markedly. By putting three bars on the first reel, two bars on the second reel, and one bar on the last reel, they found that you got it down to where it would really pay off. Even though the house maintained a built in percentage at all times so that they were going to make money over the long run, it became an entertaining device for customers to play.

In the early days, few people ever played dollar machines. But $1 was the equivalent of twenty pulls on a nickel machine, so there was a lot less wear and tear on the machine, and you paid the same license for a dollar machine that you paid for a penny machine. Of course, a $150 jackpot was more tempting to the customer, too, than a $5 one.

So, before the mathematicians were brought in, George Barnett got to experi

menting with dollar machines. Mr. Smith wanted those just as loose as the machine could be made, so George got to changing symbols, and he put the machine on this testing device of his, and he guaranteed Mr. Smith that here was a machine that would captivate people they would stand by the hour and play it, because it was so loose!

Mr. Smith had one fixed up in the slot machine department and put it on the floor. True enough, it created tremendous play, but after a couple of weeks of operation, they understood why they kept having to reload it. Barnett had finally gotten the percentage down to where it was in favor of the customer instead of in favor of the house, and it was impossible to make money on those machines.

They started, then, working backwards, or changing a symbol here and a symbol there, until he finally got those machines to where the house retained 1.9 percent of every coin that was put in. Now, this isn't very much of a percentage, and it's almost impossible to make people believe that a slot machine can be just 1.9 in favor of the house and still make money, or that the customer could still lose money on that kind of a slot machine. But 1.9 percent of all the coins played is what the machine is eventually going to end up with, so it's a pretty profitable operation. So most all the machines in the club were changed to 1.9 per cent.

Later Pappy found that through offering larger jackpots, he could increase the house percentage a teeny bit and still make machines pleasurable to play. What he called a bonus machine, and later were called the "Three Star Specials," were increased to as much as 3.9 percent in favor of the house, but they paid jackpots in a ratio of 1,000 to 1. In other words, a nickel jackpot was $50, and a dollar jackpot was $1,000. So the incentive was large enough for people to play them, and they became an entertainment device.

I don't care what you do in a casino, no matter how careful you are, no matter what you do to keep the customer from beating you, there'll be one smart enough to figure out some way to get around it. The rhythm players had become a real problem, particularly on the dollar and half dollar machines, so Mr. Smith again put Mr. Barnett to work.

What could they do? Well, they contacted the slot manufacturers, who wouldn't believe that such a thing was possible. They were convinced, finally, that it *was* possible, and they went to work, but they never did come up with a satisfactory anti rhythm device. George Barnett did, and it was so simple! There's a "butterfly" that controls the little ratchets that drop into notches in the reels, thereby stopping them in position, one, two, three. He devised a little device that would momentarily stop that butterfly just over a split second, but it was just enough to completely break up the rhythm. Those reels would turn a little bit faster one time than they would the next, or a little bit slower than they had the last time. And this almost completely eliminated the problem of the rhythm player.

With that worry behind, it would look as though you had no worries with slot machines, because the state had made it unlawful to use foreign coins or slugs in them. But the day'll never come, I don't think, when there won't be some way for some smart cookie to cheat a slot machine.

When you get in an operation the size of Harolds Club, where you have 700 slot machines on four floors, you just can't hire manpower enough to watch them all, and there is no protection against a

slot thief except surveillance. A pair of eyes looking at him is the only thing that's going to keep him honest.

I think every casino welcomes the system player. At Harolds it started with the player who was provided a pad to keep track of as many successive rolls of the ball on the roulette wheel as he cared to. They were even given a special stool at the table to sit there by the hour and watch the goings on. He could sit there for a week, if he wanted to not playing, but merely marking down the numbers as they appeared in successive plays on the wheel. That type of player, when he finally thought he had everything figured out and sat down to play, generally made a pretty sizable bet, so they were welcomed with open arms.

The only real concern about system players was when counters started taking over in the twenty one games. A counter is a person that will mentally keep track generally a good bridge player or gin player that has a faculty for remembering every card that's been played. He'll count the number of tens played, the number of small cards played, mentally, and then seem to know just exactly when to draw or when not to draw.

The thing that saved the industry is that the house has the prerogative of reshuffling the deck at any time. Prior to the day of the counters, it was normal procedure to deal right down to the last card, which was buried in the reshuffle. To combat the counters, the dealers might reshuffle after the first and the second hands; or, depending on the amount of play, they might go six or seven hands in a two or three hand game. So even though counters gave the industry quite a scare and cost the operators a sizable amount of money before they figured out what was happening, the thing finally worked out.



A system player (front right), pen and notes before him. "*They were even given a special stool*"

In the table games, the greatest worry from the dealer's standpoint, in addition to having to watch every minute for dishonesty, is the drinking player the player who just doesn't play

until he gets about half lubricated, and I think that takes in most of them. Invariably, if he has a little bad luck, he becomes abusive. In Harolds Club, the customer was always right, even when he was dead wrong, so the kids, the dealers, took a lot of abuse. Maybe that's one reason that it was such a good place to work they were compelled to be friendly and understanding at all times.

Tokes were probably better in Harolds Club than any place in northern Nevada because of the friendly attitude of the employees. That was the secret weapon of Harolds Club, that smile on the face of the dealers and the bartenders and even the janitors. You couldn't work there without that kind of an attitude.

Pappy used to go around and double bets. He'd just walk up behind a table and say, "Pay everybody double this time." Sometimes, if he was in a real good mood, he'd say, "Pay everybody triple if they win this time."

Well, if the dealer had a good hand and nobody won, Pappy'd say, "Give me that deck. I want to deal a sucker hand." So he'd deal everybody two cards, and then he'd deal himself four, five, or six cards, enough that he had more than twenty one, and pay everybody off.

Well, this was, of course, one of the things that endeared him to the players, because they knew it would happen regular as clockwork, and almost around the clock. I don't know how Pappy did it he'd be there at 3:00 in the morning, he'd be there at 6:00 in the morning, he'd be there at noon. He very seldom slept a full night. But he had this way, always with a big smile and a big grin, and it was contagious.

Another thing that Pappy was very good about: dealers worked just forty minutes of an hour. (The dealers were predominantly girls, of course.) They worked forty minutes, and then they got a twenty minute break. And they got their full hour lunch period, too.

Pappy was the first to use women dealers. It was another idea that he cooked up more through necessity than through desire. During World War II, when so many young men had gone off to serve, Pappy thought, "Well, why can't girls do this as well as anybody else?" Actually, when they first started with girl dealers, there was a tremendous amount of resistance on the part of the players. They felt it was a man's game, and there was no place for a woman behind that table. But that gradually wore off. After a couple of years, instead of the customers objecting to girl dealers, they really welcomed them.

The girls always had a more pleasant smile than a man dealer, and they were more understanding; and I think the average woman is more adept at handling a deck of cards, or even a pair of dice, or, as far as that goes, the little white ball on the roulette wheel. Most of the girls liked the idea of Western wear, and, of course, Western wear became the costume of Harolds Club.

Harolds Club was always a flamboyant club. Pappy was always thinking up ideas, either crazy dress ideas for the help, or . . . one time we had crazy hats that all the dealers wore that were, really, abominations. It didn't do anything for business, maybe, but it did increase the traffic flow through the club, because people'd hear about it, and they would walk through. The primary thing is to get people in the front door, so every one of those ideas did help business to some extent.

The competition between clubs was ethical, but in some cases, the jealousy was so tremendous, so intense For



"Pappy was always thinking up ideas"

instance, when the seventh story addi tion to Harolds Club was built, we wanted to put some neon tubing on the south side of the building. This would have pro truded into the air rights above the Ne vada Club, and there was always a very strong feeling, almost of hatred, by Lin coln Fitzgerald (the Nevada Club's owner) toward Mr. Smith. I think it was one sided to my knowledge, Mr. Smith didn't hate anybody. Mr. Fitzgerald ab solutely refused to permit us to put that neon tubing on the south side of the building, because it projected two or three inches over his property line, even though it was thirty or forty feet above his club. But this is typical there was just no cooperation whatsoever.

On the other hand, Bill Harrah's dad and Pappy Smith had been friends in the concessions and keno business on the West Coast, and when Bill came to town, he and Pappy worked hand in glove. They got along beautifully right up until Pappy's death. The Harrahs people re spected Mr. Smith for what he'd done, and they were always available for dis cussions on any major problems, and al ways very helpful.

Although some also others respected Mr. Smith and his operation, there was a fierce competitive attitude on the part of most of the clubs toward Harolds Club . . . most of it justified, too. At one time in the middle of the winter (the slow est season), one of the most successful operators in Reno brought a small group of his friends from out of town through Harolds Club. As he was going out the front door, he was heard to say, "See what I tell you? He has more people in his restrooms than we have in our whole club!"

There was great concern when the first gross tax was applied to gaming in 1945. That legislation was not even intro duced until they had talked to Pappy Smith. Had the competition known of this

conversation, they would've disliked Mr. Smith even more than they already did, because he supported the first gross tax on gaming on the grounds that Nevada had been very good to him, and he wanted to carry his share. That, as I re call, was one percent, later raised to two, and then finally to the formula that we have now. Pappy always said that when the day came that the rest of the busi ness community didn't prosper along with gaming, then gaming was going out the window, so he was very considerate in matters of taxation.

The Smiths made many contributions to the state of Nevada and its people, starting with the Harolds Club scholar ships, which were initiated in 1947. They would provide a fully paid four year scholarship to the University of Nevada for one member of the graduating class of each high school in the state. This be came a tremendously expensive pro gram four thousand dollars, $1,000 a year for four years, was allocated to each recipient's account then and there, so the first year, when seventeen were awarded, $68,000 that had to be set aside by the club. Over the period of time that the program ran, the Smith fam ily spent almost $1 million in educating the high school graduates to whom this program was made available.

It was with great reluctance that Mr. Smith discontinued the Harolds Club Scholarships in 1957. (Those who were awarded scholarships that year were carried through the promised four years.) His reason was very simple the legisla ture had enacted the first tax on the gross winnings of a casino. With the enactment of that legislation, Mr. Smith felt that he simply could not keep the scholarship program, and it was discontinued.

Pappy had regrets, later, that he had stopped it, but it wasn't very long until the gross tax was increased again, and he was just afraid to take on something that he couldn't finance. Pappy had a fear of borrowing money I don't think he ever borrowed any money that amounted to anything in his life unless he could see an absolute, positive way of paying it back. So for this reason, the fear that he might find himself sometime in a financial bind, we never could get him to reinstitute the scholarship program.

The Sahati brothers, who owned a club at Lake Tahoe, were high rollers. Naturally, the club liked to see them come in. But when you get into the high roller business, they play to win, and there's always a chance of losing, as well as a chance of winning. The Sahati boys during one period had a real bad stretch of bum luck, to the point where the Smith family held markers of sufficient quantity and in sufficient size that Eddie Sahati agreed to give them his club at South Tahoe in exchange for the markers that they held in the safe.

There was a difference of opinion in the family: Harold Sr. wanted very much to take advantage of that offer. Raymond I. didn't, and this was under standable, because all of the promotion, all of the policy making of the club was in the hands of Raymond I., and he just had all the job any one man could handle adequately without branching out. They turned the proposition down, and Bill Harrah later bought it, and that's now the site of Harrah's Tahoe.

I don't think anyone in business has ever had the ability to inspire friendliness on the part of an employee toward a customer like Pappy Smith could, and he didn't do it with words too much he did it with deeds. He was a great conversa tionalist. He could talk on anything, from world affairs to . . . well, almost anything

but the gambling business; he talked very little about that. But he was a natural born public relations man. He even used to come out and stand around the lobby of the Pony Express Lodge and chat with people.

In 1957, when I first went to the club, the crew floor managers and dealers, as well felt Pappy could do no wrong. There wasn't anything they wouldn't do for him, and he felt that way toward his help. It was not uncommon for someone to be stricken with an illness of long du ration and be kept on the payroll. As a matter of fact, there were many persons who were completely incapacitated whose pay was never stopped, even up until the time of Pappy's death some had been on the payroll for ten or fifteen years and unable to work.

If there was one thing that distin guished the operation of the club and the casino over and above anything else, it certainly was the big heartedness of Mr. Smith. Up until the last few years, when Internal Revenue and others made it impossible to carry out the policy, it wasn't uncommon for Mr. Smith person ally to make refunds of gambling losses to customers in amounts that were al most staggering. For instance, $350,000 in one particular year was refunded to people who had gambled away their grocery money or money that was in tended for a car payment, or something of that nature. And, as long as the Smith family owned it, Harolds Club probably was the only casino in the world that had signs around the club, "Please do not gamble more than you can afford to risk." Those signs meant exactly what they said.

Back in about 1963, Mr. Smith, in one of his more impulsive moments, decided that we were spending too much money on advertising, so he eliminated practi cally all of the local newspaper advertis ing, all of the radio, and what little TV we had in those days. And as a result, Tom Wilson's agency's revenue was cut dras tically ours was the largest account they had.

Tom came and said he was going to quit us he was going to look for a larger account. Of course, this shook us up tre mendously, but he stood by his guns, and he did resign the account. Shortly after ward, he took over as the advertising agency for Harrah's, and it became my chore to fill in until we found another man. This was a matter of four or five months. Finally, we decided that Roy Powers represented everything that we wanted in an advertising and publicity man, and he was hired and eventually took over the department as director.

The problems of a man in that posi tion are many, particularly when work ing for people who are impulsive by na ture. They're compounded by constantly being called upon by out of town news paper and TV people and others, most of them here only because they have heard that the freeloading is pretty good around Nevada casinos generally, a room, drinks, and food don't cost you anything.

We used to spend a lot of money in bringing writers in on all expense tours and having them as our guests. Of course, this is common practice. If you offer freeloading, they always accept, but they don't always do the kind of job you wish they'd do. The problem is pick ing the right type of people to bring in

Not long after Roy Powers joined us, there was a change in my responsibili ties, and my title changed from director of public relations to director of industry affairs. Prior to that, I had handled pub lic relations, but I had also supervised the conduct of all the promotions, had su

pervised the advertising department, and I had done legislative liaison and lobbying at the city, county, state, and federal levels. It was decided that we should divide all of this among three de partments. And, too, Jim Hunter, who had been casino manager for any num ber of years, was replaced then in that position by Harold Smith Jr., and this meant there had to be a position cre ated for Jim.

I kept the legislative duties, all of the lobbying duties, and all of the pet pro motions that I had under my wing. I turned over the tours and public relations to Jim Hunter, and I turned over the ad vertising and publicity department en tirely to Roy Powers. As industry relations director, I didn't do as much public rela tions work, and I spent more time on leg islative matters. I kept my pet projects, though, of Monday holidays and the Pan Am Highway group.

One thing that hurt the gaming indus try during those years was the loss of our silver dollars. In a talk to the Rotary Club in Reno, Eva Adams, Director of the U. S. Mint, got carried away with an idea. She warned us that silver dollars were on their way out; that it would be a very short time before no more were minted. Congress frowned on them, they were only in use in a few states in the Union, and it was only a short time before there would be no more silver dollars minted.

Immediately, we were swamped with requests for silver dollars from collectors all over the country. In our case at Harolds Club, we carried a reserve of about a million dollars in silver dollars. They were used on all of the tables, and the best slot machines in the house were the silver dollar slot machines.

A week or two after Eva had made her talk to the Rotarians, we were losing silver dollars at the rate of about $60,000 a week. There wasn't any way to control it. If customers were standing by a row of dollar slot machines and wanted to buy five rolls of dollars, $20 to the roll, and if there were ten people there, and they all wanted five rolls, there wasn't very much you could do but sell them to them. You had no way of knowing whether they were collectors or players. It turned out that they were not players.

Making things worse, at about the time the story came out, the price of sil ver went up. This really caused people to start hoarding silver dollars! They were just picking them up as souvenirs early in the game, but when word got out that silver was going up, the hoarders came on to us and absolutely cleaned the state of silver dollars.

The end of silver dollars was a blow to the industry, because it meant con verting the dollar slot machines. It also meant that we wouldn't have dollars to use on the tables, and most everyone gambled with dollars in those days. They had to be replaced with dollar chips, or, finally, with tokens. We were given per mission by the Treasury Department, through prior approval and submitting of a sketch and quite a little red tape, to mint our own tokens to replace the silver dollar. But the machines had to be modi fied, and that was quite expensive. Then, miraculously (and because of politics), in 1971 the Eisenhower silver dollar was made available to us.

When it came to politics and cam paign contributions, the Smiths always played both sides of the fence. For in stance, when Pat McCarran was running, there was no one in the state that could beat him, so he always got a sizable con tribution. But it didn't matter who ran against McCarran, his opponent would get a contribution, too. It was a rare oc casion when the Smiths opposed a can

didate every one who came in was given some kind of a contribution.

It wasn't so much the political candi dates as others that would take advan tage of Mr. Smith. He was known for his sincere belief that we were losing ground fast to the communists. Anybody that had an anti communist campaign of any kind would come in, and he was more generous with them than with anybody else he always went into those things with his personal finances, not with club money. Pappy fought communism twenty four hours a day, as long as he was alive, even to the point of founding the All American Society, which was in tended to be national in scope. It never got that far.

Pappy encouraged employees of the club and other local businessmen to join his association, and he personally provided financing to the tune of thou sands and thousands of dollars. He had all of us employees signed up, providing us with a little membership card. The sole purpose of the organization was to fight communism on every hand. He had people come in, famous personages such as that FBI agent in Texas, the strong communist fighter, Dan Smoot. He had him here on several occasions, and also a gentleman by the name of Hunt from Texas, who was a strong anti communism man.

Raymond I. Smith wasn't afraid of anything else on earth, but he was scared to death that the communists were going to take over. He remarked often that should they take over while he was still living, because of his strong op position, he'd be one of the first marked for oblivion when they took the reins.

Politically, we had very few problems at the city and county level, asked no favors, and, generally speaking, received none. We did have a close contact as long as Pop Southworth was on the city council. Pop and Raymond I. were good friends, had been from the time Pappy opened the "hole in the wall." With the assistance of Mr. Southworth, at the city level, any problems were generally ironed out satisfactorily.

During the state legislative sessions, Walter Cox, a former state senator and the editor and owner of the *Mason Val ley News*, advised the legislators on Mr. Smith's thinking on gaming matters or pending legislation pertaining to gaming. It was also not uncommon for Mr. Smith personally to go over and appear be fore committees, and this was better than any three ring circus you ever saw. He had a tremendous sense of humor.

The only big battle Pappy ever lost was when the increase to the gross gam ing revenue tax went through. He ap peared personally in front of the legisla ture, and he pointed out that he felt it was too much. He reminded them that he was the only member of the gaming fraternity that had approved the 1 per cent gross tax, but he was really con cerned about the 3 to 5.5 percent scale that was proposed in 1957. It passed any way.

Pappy was heartbroken. It was the first time that he had ever gone over and reasoned with the statesmen and had completely lost the battle. Actually, the legislation on the 5.5 percent bracket affected only Harolds Club it was the only club in the state large enough to fall into the 5.5 percent bracket. Pappy was hurt, and he decided to discontinue the Harolds Club scholarship program at the university. But it went deeper than that. He lost a great deal of respect for the legislators as a result of that action, and it became more and more difficult with every state election to get him enthused over political contributions. He had just lost interest.

John Wesley Noble was working at a Bay Area paper when he and Harold Smith Sr. began talking about collaborating on Harold's autobiography. Harold was unquestionably the world's greatest egoist, and John assured him that his story would be a best seller for sure.

The book, entitled *I Want to Quit Winners* did sell pretty well, the first printing. However, when sales began to drop off, we began giving autographed copies of it to anybody and everybody. Books were mailed to people all over the country. For a couple of years, it probably had as good a distribution as any book but the Bible, because if they couldn't sell them, they gave them away.

I Want to Quit Winners was Harold's history of his life in the gambling business. The underlying themes were that he was much smarter than the average individual and that he was successful in gaming because he had the gift of extra sensory perception, ESP. The book certainly did a lot for Harold Sr.'s ego, but it didn't do the family any good, because he used it as a vehicle to downgrade his dad and his former wife and the other people who had helped make him successful.

When the Smiths built the seven story addition to Harolds Club, they had no plan to put entertainment in there. They had gaming on the top floor, and a great big circular bar with railroad trains running around on it they called it the Railroad Bar. Harold got the idea of bringing in entertainment after traveling to Las Vegas and seeing what was going on there. Lounge acts about that time were becoming quite popular, and that was something he could handle on the seventh floor, so he came back, tore out that beautiful bar, cut it in half, did away with the railroad trains, and moved the bar, making room for a showroom.

Now, like so many other things, there never was a show in Harolds Club that paid its way. And some of the shows that were booked on the seventh floor wouldn't have paid their way if he'd had a 500 seat theater restaurant instead of 100 seats. But entertainment benefited the club we were always looking for something that would keep our name before the public, yet never mention gaming or slot machines, and entertainment provided this. Of course, the ad people loved that, particularly when Roy Powers came into the picture: "Why, this is great! Here's something that's acceptable to all media."

True to form, as was the case with everything else, we went overboard. We even had advertising appearing in national magazines, which didn't mean anything to anybody, other than it kept your name before the public. We got up into a half million, three quarters of a million dollars advertising budget, which was 98 percent money poured down the drain. So were the shows. When you bring in Louis Armstrong, or Harry James, or Petula Clark at fabulous weekly salaries, there is just no way under the sun, even including the gaming take on the seventh floor, that it could ever break even.

Pappy saw this after a short time, and he did everything within his power to stop that unnecessary expenditure of money. It was costing so much that, several times during the years I was there, he actually closed the seventh floor. But Harold Sr., would prevail. He had a way of soft soaping his dad. He could get around him on almost anything, and the seventh floor would reopen.

Finally, the day came when Pappy put his foot down and said, "It might be fine, but if this is what it takes to build our image, we're just going to have to leave our image where it is, because we can't afford this continual drain." He curtailed

the advertising and the price of acts to the point where it was something the club could afford.

Booking entertainers, handling them while they were in the club, making arrangements for their rooms, was reserved entirely to Harold Smith Sr. This was one of his pet projects, and it almost became a hobby with him. He lived it twenty four hours a day. It could've been, and would've been, the financial ruination of the club if not for Pappy keeping it under control.

In 1965 Harrah's Club took the initiative in trying to form an industry association that would represent the interests of gaming at the state legislature and in Washington. Mr. Smith and Guy Lent supported this effort, and when resistance developed from other gaming operators, it was agreed that I would be assigned to help smooth things over and get the nascent association organized. We succeeded, and in July of that year I was elected the first president of the Gaming Industry Association of Nevada.



Les Kofoed as president of the Gaming Industry Association of Nevada.

I accepted the presidency in the belief that the office would require little of my time beyond attendance at monthly meetings and a few other events. It soon became apparent, however, that this was almost a full time position. The Smiths felt my role in the association was good for the club, so they continued to carry me on the Harolds Club payroll while I served as president. Then, in 1969, I was asked by the association's board of directors to accept the salaried position of director. It wasn't easy to leave Harolds Club it was almost like leaving home but it seemed to me that I had gone as far as I could up that ladder; so, reluctantly, I resigned from my position with Harolds to become director of the Gaming Industry Association of Nevada. I had been with the Smith family for seventeen memorable years.

12

Al Lazzarone

Al Lazzarone was born in Sacramento, California. After graduating from high school, he attended Sac ramento Junior College for two and a half years, then enlisted in the U. S. Navy. Discharged from the navy in 1946, Lazzarone soon got married and entered the University of Nevada, where he completed his edu cation. In 1947 he played baseball for Nevada in the spring and, following graduation, softball for a team sponsored by Harolds Club, where he had a summer job. As Al remembers it,

My first job at Harolds Club was to witness jack pots and keep minors out of the club. I got into trouble when I tried to run out Pappy Smith's wife, Iola, with her two kids. She really gave me a bad time, but the next day Pappy came over and said, "Don't let them come in again." He was on my side.

Frank Archuletta was managing the Harolds Club softball team, and since I had played some softball in Reno, Frank asked me to join the team. All the players worked in Harolds Club except Lyle Rausch, who was a school teacher, and we were all assigned to the graveyard shift. Harold's wife would sit in the dugout with us. She really enjoyed that. We even got her a uniform.

It meant something to play softball for Harolds we were paid $10 for hitting a double, $15 for a triple, and $25 for a home run, which was a lot of money in those days. We were also getting paid $15 a day as dealers at the club, even while we were away play ing ball. We would get a check once a month for our base hits, and the paycheck for our wages was sitting there when we came back. And we didn't need any money while we were on a trip Pappy Smith said, "You can stay in the best hotels or motels, and you can have steak three times a day."

We had a bus that was painted, "Harolds Club Softball Team," and our won lost record was painted on it that would change every day. At about the time I joined the team, Harolds Club imported Les Haney and Pat Peeples, two of the best softball pitch ers in the country. The strength of our pitching made us very good, and teams would load up with all stars to try to beat us. We would give them $100 if they could.



Once we went on a trip that started at Redwood City and went from town to town all the way to San Diego. We were gone about three weeks. Quite a trip big crowds and *very* stiff competition, especially in the San Joaquin Valley around Fresno, which was really a hot bed of softball in those days. The crowds were tremendous. I mean, we had a packed house every game we played!

Our wives came with us on that trip, and Harold Jr., who was fifteen years old, traveled with us too. A couple of the players were supposed to take care of him, but they neglected their duties, and he kind of ran wild. My wife Dor othy took him under her wing and made sure that he stayed out of trouble, be cause he was having a ball.

The softball team was Nevada State Champion in 1947 and was real good advertising for Harolds Club, but before the season was over, we ran into a prob lem. The team was kind of padding its bills a little, and Pappy found out, and he canceled Harolds Club's sponsorship. We were scheduled to go to this big tour nament in Phoenix, with teams from all over the United States, but Pappy says, "No. Harolds Club is not going to take care of anything anymore." So Raymond Smith, who just adored our softball team, sponsored it out of his own pocket.

Raymond flew some of the guys down, and the rest of us drove down. He paid for our rooms and fed us. In the first game, Haney was pitching just a *tremen dous* game when he developed a blis ter on his finger, and the blister broke. He lost his effectiveness, and we ended up losing the game. It was a double elimi nation tournament, and we won one or



Harolds Club sponsored Reno's 1947 state champion softball team. Al Lazzarone is at the far right, second row. At the left end of the front row are Pat Peeples (left) and Les Haney (right), the two "im-ported" star pitchers. Raymond Smith is at the center of the front row.

two games; then we lost another one, and we were out.

When the season was over, we spent the winter working in the club. I had learned to deal twenty one on our first road trip many of the guys on the team were dealers, and they taught me how to shuffle the cards and whatever else I could pick up. When I came back after that trip, they put me with an experi enced dealer. I spent several nights deal ing with her, and then I got my own table on graveyard shift.

There were a lot more women deal ing twenty one at Harolds than men. Or dinarily, men learned craps first, but I broke in dealing twenty one, and then I started dealing craps after that. When I started, Scherry Harrah was dealing twenty one at the table next to me. You'd look at these two tables, and Scherry's was full of male customers, and mine was full of women.

In 1948 we stopped playing softball, and we fielded a hardball team instead. We ended up going to Denver for the *Denver Post* Tournament, and again, there were teams from all over the coun try. Pappy Smith came with us, and a few days later, his wife, Iola, joined us there. Pappy wanted to play hearts all the time, and Lefty Riordan and those guys would just cheat the heck out of him. Pappy didn't care; he just had a good time. We made it to the finals, where we lost to the Coors team.

After that season, I started thinking that if I was going to stay in the gaming business, I ought to stop playing ball and concentrate on working. That was the only way I could advance, and with an infant son, we needed the money. I be came a full time dealer.

At Harolds Club, there were no rules about how to deal, we just dealt! [laugh ter] They taught you a few things . . . but it was said they'd let you deal on the crap table whether you knew the game or not. They finally started breaking people in by putting them with experi enced dealers, but rules weren't that strict there they taught you to look at your hole card prop erly and protect the deck and stuff like that, and that was it.



"There were a lot more women dealing twenty-one at Harolds than men." Al Lazzarone is in the back at left, dealing at Harolds Gun Club in the early 1950s.

One night shortly after I started, I was dealing on graveyard shift, and I had three players. I dealt the cards, and I had a king of spades up; I peek at my hole card, and it's another black king. So I played out the hand, turned my hole card up, and it was an other king of spades! [laughter]

Right away, I knew I was in trouble.

Jim Hunter, the casino manager, and Jack Shaver were over at the bar laughing like mad. Jim had walked by my table and recognized this guy playing there, and he knew something was going to happen . . . and it did. I was so flustered, I couldn't talk. There was a roulette table next to me, and I'm trying to tell the dealer to pull the rope, ring the bell, and get somebody over here!

When the time came to learn dice, they put me on a table with experienced dealers, and I spent time with them. Gradually, I worked my way into where they'd let me deal once in awhile. Of course, in those days, on the crap table you dealt with silver.

Tip wise, you were better off on the twenty one tables, because you didn't have to split with other dealers. On the crap table you had to split tips — the two dealers on the table got two fifths each, and the relief dealer got a fifth of the tips. Dealing was very lucrative because of the tip situation, and you could get away with a lot that you can't today as far as taxes are concerned. I used to drop all my tips in a piggy bank, and my son was a "tip baby," because that's how we paid the hospital bills and the doctor bills.

The Harolds Club gun club was out in the Spanish Springs area. The Smiths might hold half a dozen big trap and skeet shoots a year at the club, and there would be gambling there during the shoots, but not during the rest of the year. They started with one dice table and three or four twenty one games — no slot machines at the beginning. You had to have money to shoot, so most of the shooters were money people. A lot of them didn't even know how to play the games, but we taught them, and we didn't hustle anybody, and in the long run it paid off as far as tips were concerned.

We'd work long, long hours at the gun club, but it was totally enjoyable because of the people we were dealing with and the tips we were making. We didn't get any breaks, and we would sip on brandy just to keep us going. One session there, we closed the game, and I went home, shaved and showered, and went right back out. One gentleman had lost quite a few dollars, and he wanted to keep on playing. Before the night was over, my feet were so sore from standing, I could hardly move.

I dealt out there with Frankie Eamigh. She had a great personality, and we worked real well together. In the club, they kept a record of how the table was doing as far as your average win per day. One day Pappy's looking me up on these rating sheets, and he says, "Gosh, you got a great personality here!" I was averaging a big daily win, and the higher your average, the better your "personality."

In the morning, we would load my car up with all the money for the games and haul it out to the gun club, and we'd bring the money back at night. Dorothy would worry, because there were no telephones out there, and if I was late getting home, she didn't know if I was working or if there had been trouble. That was a lonely highway — why somebody didn't ambush us with all that money, I'll never know.

The first time that we stayed really late out there, Harold Smith Sr. came out with his bodyguard, and they had their guns with them. They were *worried*. Nobody knew where anybody was, and there was so much money involved! It wasn't only the silver and the chips — the boss out there carried the bankroll in his pocket. When somebody would cash out

their chips, he'd come out of his pocket and peel off the bills and pay them off. Chuck Webster and Jim Hunter both served as bosses out there at different times.

Frank Manzelli used to tend bar out at the gun club all the time, because he was great with people. But Frank was a real rounder, and he was gambling the whole time the guys were out there shooting. He came to me finally, and he says, "There's no money left in the till. I lost it all." [laughter] I had to go to Chuck Webster to replenish the supply in the till, but he didn't fire Frank.

Frank and Freddie Cogswell tended bar together on graveyard shift at Harolds Club, and you talk about a three ring circus! [laughter] Oh, man! Something was *always* going on with those two guys, and they had a great following. A lot of things went on in those days that don't go on today some for the better, and some for the worse.

When I went on the floor in 1955, my wages jumped from $15 to $25 a day. I was dealing upstairs, second floor, when the Labor Day weekend came along. That was our big holiday, but they were short a floor man, so Jim Hunter asked me to work on the floor. No previous ex perience, nothing, just, "You'll be the floor man up here." When you work the floor, you're walking through the crowds, and the crowd on Labor Day was so se vere. At that time they had a table on the third floor, which I had to check too. Now I got to run upstairs; now I got to come back downstairs.

All I could do was fill the tables I never could look at any of the action, because I didn't have time. In those days, when you made the fills, you went over and got a tin can full of silver, and you dumped it on a table, and you dumped some chips, and that was it. I worked three days doing that, and no body said a word to me. I was never told that I was going to work the floor I just continued showing up every night and doing it.

When I started on the floor, there were no procedures that floor men had to fol low. As time went by, however, they started putting out stuff. Harold Sr. used to get on the mike and chew the floor men out for not doing anything: "If you see somebody standing in a corner like a telephone pole," he would say, "that's a floor man." It would go out through the whole casino. If you weren't moving, you would move! [laughter]

Outside of making the fills, you tried to watch your games as much as you could. In those days, everybody concen trated on the big money players. Some times that was overdone something might be going on down at the other end of the area that you weren't aware of.

Part of your job was to correct deal ers or help dealers to deal better. The important thing in those days, when you had tables back to back, was to be sure a dealer was looking at her hole card properly. Somebody behind the dealer could be signaling to the players across from her if they could see her hole card.

Harold Sr. was a New York Yankee fan. In 1964, the Yankees were playing the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series, and Harold went back East for the games. I hated the Yankees, and Harold called every night, needling me about the games. One night he offered me and Tom Davis ten to one odds on the next game. We each bet $10, and Ken Boyer hit a grand slam to win the ball game for St. Louis. [laughter]

Harold Sr. didn't get his way much as long as Pappy was there. Pappy controlled everything; there was no question about that, and the big difference between Harolds and other clubs was Pappy Smith's drilling people to treat the customers right. You always gave them the benefit of the doubt. When a problem came up, many times you paid the customer just to settle it — you knew he was wrong, but you paid him anyway. Pappy wanted it that way, and that's how they built up the business.

When they first started this, it was unheard of in the gaming industry — the customer was *never* right. [laughter] In the old days, if a customer started an argument, he was thrown out, but Pappy changed all that. It was easy to work under those conditions, because you knew where you stood — they were going to back you unless it was something really flagrant, and it's easier to be nice.

Pappy's doubling bets all the time was the greatest gimmick in the world. Guys would stay at a table waiting to get their bet doubled, and they just ended up losing more money. And, for a brief period, the club let the dealers pick the time to double the bets. You talk about a license to steal! [laughter] That didn't last very long.

Pappy would make the rounds. You'd see him stop at a table . . . and it got to be a game, because now the other customers are sitting and waiting for Pappy to get to their table. As he approached, they would push out a bigger bet. Then Pappy got smart — he'd see this, and he'd go to another table. [laughter]

Harolds Club treated the customers right, and that's why they kept coming back. They gave away so much money — a lot of times as a dealer you'd have to win it two or three times before it really counted, what with Pappy doubling the bets and stuff like that. But it sure paid off for the Smiths, because they had the business.

Pappy had his favorites among the floor managers and dealers . . . mostly among the female dealers. [laughter] When the bonus came along, some got more than others. We got a check, and nobody was supposed to know what you or anybody got for a bonus. One year they gave out bonuses, and *quite a few* people squawked because they didn't get enough or they found out that somebody else was getting a bit more. So they called us back in and gave us a second bonus.

In the 1960s, Harrah's began to surpass Harolds Club. Bill Harrah was smart enough to pick up on some successful things that Harolds did and refine them, and he ran his club like a business, whereas Harolds was a loose operation, management wise and on down the line. Harrah's had procedural guidelines, and Harolds didn't until later on. Bill Harrah took advantage of the situation to become very successful — you got to give him credit for that.

Pappy Smith's death in 1967 didn't have an effect on my job, but they were lost without him. You could see the club go downhill — there was no direction. Harold was going off the deep end, and there was a big difference, because when Pappy was alive, he had controlled everything from above. What he lacked in casino knowledge, he more than made up with his special talent — he just knew how to bring people in, period.

The club was sold to Howard Hughes in 1970. That was kind of sad, and employees had no idea what the new management would be like. If they had known, they'd have left a lot sooner than they did! [laughter] Just about everything was changed, and they brought all these

people in and ran it like a Las Vegas operation.

I used to come home at night and cry. We had had the best crap business in town, and you could just see all these customers going out the back door to Harrah's because of the way they were treated under the new regime. And for a long time the Hughes people thought that we employees were cheating them. Every day somebody was leaving to go to work in another place because they couldn't take what was going on, but, for some unknown reason, the new managers took a liking to me, and I took a liking to them, and I got a big promotion.

I got along well with all the employees, and Jack Pieper, the first boss the Hughes people brought in, recognized that fact. He took me off the floor and put me in employee relations. The union was trying to organize the dealers at that time, and I'd catch dealers on a break and caution them about what was going to happen if the union came in. They voted it in anyway, but the dealers did not go through with it after they had actually won the election. Pieper never forgot that he felt that I had a lot to do with the kids deciding not to go.

The effort to organize the dealers arose from the fact that the new management didn't treat employees the way the Smiths had treated them. Maybe a lot of the kids were spoiled; maybe I was spoiled, too they never leaned on you that hard in the old Harolds Club. Now, when this group came in, they operated just the opposite, and some of the dealers couldn't accept that. One thing above all others that pushed the kids toward getting a union was that management wanted them to pool their tips.

I got along fine with the new management after awhile, except for Jay Corn. He took over as the swing shift manager, and Pieper made me his assistant. Jay and Curly Carpenter were buddies, and Jay had wanted Curly for his assistant, and I was under the gun all the time. Oh, man, it was terrible!

Yes, it was terrible until J.C. Jordan came in as general manager when Pieper left to open the MGM. J.C. did not like Jay Corn, whom he had known before. One of the happiest days of my life was when J.C. called me into his office and tossed me a set of keys he had called Corn up to his office and terminated him. Corn had said, "Was Al Lazzarone up here talking to you?" [laughter] I never said a word. Talk about sweet revenge He'd made life miserable for me.

With Corn's departure, I became shift manager on swing shift. In 1978, things weren't going too well for Harolds, and I left to become casino manager at the El Dorado.

13

Dan Orlich

Dan Orlich was born in 1924, in Chisholm, Minnesota. He grew up there, and after completing high school attended Northwestern University as a member of the Navy V 12 program. Orlich came to Reno in June of 1947 to play football for the University of Nevada. That led to a part time job at Harolds Club. Following a professional football career with the Green Bay Packers, he returned to Reno and Harolds Club. As he remembers it,

In the summer after the school year of 1947 48, I got a job at Harolds Club as a bouncer. Joe Sheeketski, the head football coach at the University of Nevada, also worked there that summer in a publicity stunt, Pappy Smith had hired him to be a crap dealer.

I graduated in February of 1949, and I worked at Harolds Club from then until June. Then my sister got married, so I went back to Minnesota to attend her wedding, and from there I went to Green Bay, Wisconsin, to play for the Green Bay Packers. I played for the Packers from 1949 through 1951. I was a lieutenant in the marine reserves, and the Korean War was going full blast by then, so I figured, "I'm going back to Nevada and have some fun until they call me up." Well, I kept throwing away requests for reserve training, and shortly thereafter I received my discharge. So I stayed in Reno the rest of my life.

While I was waiting to be called up by the marines, I went to work again at Harolds. The opinion in those days was, a casino job was not a permanent job, it was just something to work at, and that's what I was doing. That was about the time when the kidnapping incident with Pappy took place. They wanted to have a twenty four hour guard at Pappy's new home on Gordon Avenue, and I was hired by Jim Hunter (Harolds Club's general manager) to be the night guard.

I had to sit in my car, parked across the street. Finally Iola Smith, Pappy's wife, said, "Why is he parked over there? Why don't you let him park in the driveway?" So he did. All my buddies would visit me and bring me beer and stuff, and one night Iola caught

me sleeping there in the driveway. She wasn't mad or anything, but she mentioned it to Jim Hunter. I said, "Jim, I'm tired of sitting out there anyway." He replaced me, and I came into the casino.

I learned to deal craps. Ethel Blake taught me. She was the premier instructor for males, because she was a hard nose she knew how to handle us. [laughter] She was a dear old gal; I just loved her. She taught you not only how to deal but how to handle customers, how to be a salesman, and how to do everything. She was good. After learning how to deal, I worked on the dime table for a while, and then in April of 1952 I started to shoot trap.

Harold Smith Sr. and Raymond and a bunch of their employees loved to shoot Jack Shaver, Jim Hunter, Duke Lindeman, Jim Simpson, Rick Oldham . . . oh, a bunch of them. In 1950, Harolds Club bought the Jabberwock Gun Club, out on the Pyramid Lake Highway. Sometimes when Harold was on a gambling spree, he'd go out there, and he'd empty his pockets of $5 chips, put them all on the counter, and say, "OK, we're going to shoot for that." He didn't do this when he had lost downtown he did it when he'd won big. There might be fifty bucks there for the winner, and more often than not, I picked up the chips. I said to myself "Where the hell's this sport been all my life?"

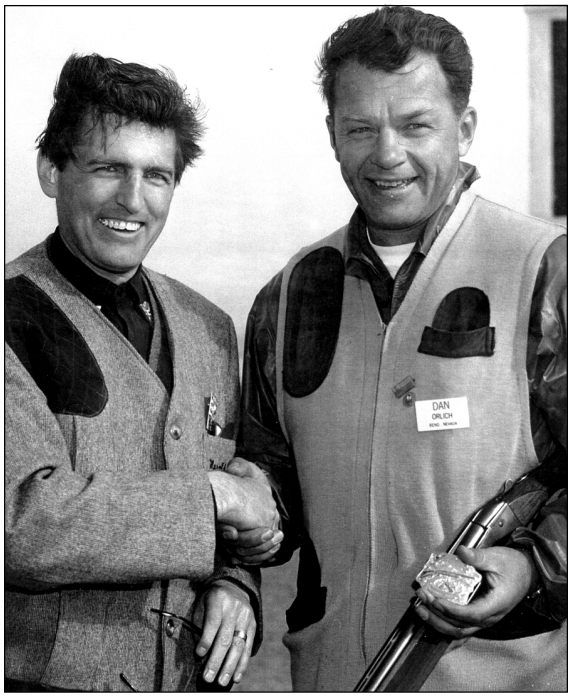
Harold's first wife, Dorothy Smith, started coming out to the club. (They'd been divorced since about 1946.) She would come out during the shoots, like a businesswoman, to see what was going on. Dorothy owned 48 percent of Harolds Club, and Harold was a 48 percent owner. Raymond A. Smith, Harold's older brother, was just a 4 percent owner.

Dorothy wanted the gun club promoted, because it was starting to cost too much money to operate. She called it a toy, a plaything for Harold and Raymond. She said, "Either promote this club and make it a paying proposition, or get rid of it." At that time, I was shooting very, very well, and Dorothy told Harold, "You've got a top shooter here. Send him to all those shoots up and down the coast and promote this club." So that is what I began doing, in addition to putting in a full shift whenever I was at home. I would get in my car and load it with Harolds Club whiskey (they had a special brand), Harolds Club ashtrays, license plate holders, and matches, and I'd head out to the shoots. They were all over the west coast . . . even Vancouver and Idaho and Arizona. I started in Arizona in 1953.

They had what they called the "Winter Chain." There were shoots starting in mid December, with a shoot every weekend up until the Golden West Grand, which was the first week in May. Usually I'd be gone three or four days and come back, maybe be home a week or two, and then go to another one. The longest I would be gone was five or six weeks. When I was home I ran my regular shift at Harolds Club.

By 1953, a lot of trap shooters in the West had become aware of Harolds Gun Club in Reno, Nevada. "What a place to go to shoot! It has gambling, it has slot machines, it has drinking, and it has shooting. That club has everything!" It soon became the top gun club in the United States, outside of the Vandalia, Ohio gun club, which was the home of the Grand American.

Harold was not a follower of the sport, he just loved to shoot. Of course, he was at every single shoot held here in Reno. He was very active, very much in front of everything, putting on a show. One year he passed out Harolds Club whiskey; an



Harold Jr. (left) awards a trophy belt buckle to Dan Orlich at an event in the early 1960s.

other time he passed out 3,000 cowboy hats. Three thousand of them! He bought them from Rex Bell, the former lieutenant governor, who had a store right across the street from Harolds Club. Harold was always doing something to promote the gun club, and that was where I had most of my contact with him.

For a period of eighteen to twenty years, Harolds trap shooting club had the second largest shoot in the nation the Golden West Grand, which always ended on Mother's Day. We had up wards of fifteen hundred shooters. And I mean, they gambled, and a majority of them this is way before the days of motor homes and campers stayed at the Pony Express Lodge, which was owned by Harolds Club. They would gamble at the gun club all day long, and then at night they would come down town and gamble at Harolds Club. It was a very, very successful operation.

I did pretty well for myself too. They pick an All American Team every year, and I was on it twenty two times and was captain six times. For maybe twenty years, I had the highest singles average in the nation, and in 1969, at our July shoot, I shot 400 out of 400. It had never been done before, and it wasn't done again until Phil Kiner, from Cheyenne, Wyoming, did it in 1995. We're the only two guys that have ever done it.

At the Gun Club, they had some slots in a little room right across the bar from the pit, and slots lined the walls of the entire club. They also had a roulette wheel, a crap table, and four twenty one tables. For the big shoots, they'd put in two more crap tables and a few more twenty ones. I think there were as many as six or eight twenty one tables.

The gambling was open only during scheduled shoots, but then it was open to anybody and everybody who wanted to play. The set ups the bank rolls, the chips, et cetera were supposed to be taken out to the gun club in the morning and brought back to Harolds in the evening, but there was many an evening when they never did come back in, be cause the games would stay open all night.

There were lots of big games out there during shoots. In the 1950s and 1960s, a $10,000 line of credit was big money, but we had some shooters with $20,000 lines of credit; some had practically unlimited lines. Bob Pattie, from Cutbank, Mon tana, came to the gun club one year and won $180,000 on the crap table. Then he went to the main club down town at about 2:00 in the morning and lost $220,000. That's the kind of action they had in those days. Ben Tankel lost forty or fifty or sixty thousand dollars one day. God knows how much Harold Wooley lost in those days! Bill Utzinger,

Herman Peterson . . . oh, I could go on and on. There were some shooters that were heavy gamblers. They lost tens of thousands of dollars.

At that time, we used to have five good shoots a year. We had one in January, which was a live bird shoot it was called the Big Brother Shoot. Then we had a big trap shoot in March, the big Golden West Grand in May, the PITA Grand in July, and then a live bird shoot again in November. Traditionally, the biggest gamblers of the trap shooters came only during the scheduled trap shoots. Those shooters who lived close would come down in between times, but they were not necessarily the high rollers.

Jim Hunter was what you would call the casino manager. All the shift managers, everybody, reported to Jim, who was the liaison to the Smith family and to Guy Lent. Guy Lent was in the administrative and financial end of the business. Harold Smith Sr. was referred to as the operational boss, and you might say Pappy was the general manager, the big boss. Everybody reported to Pappy, even if not directly. When he said to do something, you did it.

There's no question that Pappy was the guiding light, the driving force, the boss. Even Harold and Raymond considered him the boss. But of course, Pappy was not a real dyed in the wool casino man. He was a promotion man, a PR man, and he knew that stuff better than anybody in the entire business. Harold was the casino man he was the rock as far as the casino was concerned. Whenever you had a problem with a customer or with anything pertaining to the casino, you went to Harold.

Pappy was upstairs in the office, and he did all of the promoting, but when people say that without Pappy there wouldn't have been a Harolds Club . . . I don't think that's true. Harold and Raymond were very important, and Dorothy was also very instrumental in putting Harolds Club on the map.

Pappy brought customers to the club, and Harold Sr. saw that things went well when people were in the club, and that the games were operated efficiently. Raymond did his share, but he had other interests. He would give vacations in the vault, occasionally he would deal, and occasionally he would go out and double the bets.

Harold was there constantly, as was Pappy, but Pappy was pretty much up in the office. He would only come down to do his thing, to double the bets, talk to customers, talk to the dealers. He was really hands on, but Harold was the operations guy.

Harold would deal sometimes, and when he dealt twenty one, he was very smooth, very deliberate he had a reason for every move he made. Every so often, he would call a bunch of the gal dealers together and instruct them as to his technique. Another boss who dealt sometimes was Jack Shaver, who was an expert twenty one dealer.

Harold dealt dice too, but only as a lark, just for something to do, part of Pappy's public relations. Harold would come in, and you could see the carnival man from the word go. He would come in there, and he would liven up a game in ten seconds. Of course, he had that booming voice! He would kind of mimic Pappy at times. One time he stopped the game and said, "Pappy, get more money. We got a bunch of suckers here, but they've been lucky." Everybody just roared.

Pappy used to come around and deal, and he'd call the hand he dealt a "poor bastard's" hand. He'd walk in and take the deck away from the dealer and say, "Let me deal to these poor bas

tards." And you could see it wasn't of fensive at all the players loved it. Of course, when he kept hitting until he went broke, then they would *really* love it. Pappy's favorite expression was, "They may beat me six times, but I'll beat them the seventh. I'll get it all back." And he usually did.

He told Harold one time, "I'm sick and tired of these crossroaders coming in here. Let's open Thursdays for them, call it Crossroader Day, and tell them that if they come in any other day, we'll break their arms."

Harold says, "No way, Pappy." But if you stop and think, that wasn't too shabby an idea.

Harold Sr. would sometimes go on drinking and gambling sprees for weeks at a time, and the employees would get anxious, because after a while he'd get very belligerent and unfriendly. If some thing happened he didn't like, he'd walk up to the shift manager and say, "Fire that person!" He made it very difficult to work.

Harold would sit and drink at the Sil ver Dollar Bar for hours and hours, week on week, and his only nourishment was eggnogs. After two or three months, somebody in his family would take him to St. Mary's . . . put him in a straitjacket, fill him full of penicillin, and start to dry him out. Then he'd be sick for a long time; then he'd recognize that he had a drink ing problem, and he'd go on Antabuse. But when he wanted to go on another binge, he would just get off the Antabuse.

After Harold Smith Jr. had his five day gambling session at Harolds Club, win ning tens of thousands of dollars, an or der came down from the Gaming Con trol Board. It was posted in the main cashier's cage, and it stated that an owner or a stockholder could no longer gamble in his own establishment, nor could he furnish the money for anybody else to gamble. One night I came in to work on the graveyard shift, and there was hardly anybody on the main floor. I thought, "Oh, this is going to be a slow night." Then I went up the escalator to the second floor, and the place was absolutely jammed, just wall to wall with people, all of them watching a crap game on Number 10 dice.

Here's Harold Smith Sr. and Junior, absolutely bombed out of their minds. You couldn't see the layout, it was so covered with chips and $100 bills. I went up to George Wilson, who was the night shift manager, and I said, "George, a week ago an order was posted at the main cashier's cage. How long have they been playing?"

He said, "They've been playing for three hours at least."

"Why didn't you stop it?"

He said, "You stop it. They happen to own this place."

Well, I went over to the game and said, "Harold, you know better." He looked up at me, and he was slobbering drunk. I said, "Harold, you're not allowed to play in this club. There's an order in the cashier's cage saying an owner can no longer gamble in his club."

Harold looked at me and said, "Oh, yes." He took all this money and shoved it in front of Harold Jr.

I said, "It also states you cannot fur nish the money for anybody else to play."

He looked at me again, and, if looks could kill, I would have died right there. He says, "Come on, Junior." They go and sit in the Silver Dollar lounge and leave all their money on the table, and so now the game is over.

I told the dealer to rack the chips and drop the paper in the drop box, then I went to Helen Feretto, the vault man ager, and I said, "Helen, get a couple of

bags; we're going to pretend that we're readying the table for the next shift."

Helen had the key to the drop box. I asked her to open the box and put the money in the bags. She couldn't open the door, so I said, "Let me try." I tried, but it was so jammed I thought I would break the key. Finally, I pushed the door in as hard as I could then I let go, and the goddamned box just exploded! Here comes all those $100 bills flying out all over the floor. The two dealers and I started scooping them up. We filled up three bags, and we went down to the vault.

Then I did something I'd be in jail for if it happened today. I said, "Helen, put all that money in a couple of those big, sil ver dollar bags." (They were much big ger than the little red gaming bags.) She looked at me funny. I said, "Just put the money in there, Helen; I'll explain later." I tied the bags up, and I took them up stairs and dumped them in front of Harold Jr. and Harold Sr., and I said, "Here's the evidence. As far as we are concerned, this game never took place."

Well, nothing of that magnitude ever escaped Pappy. He called twenty min utes after it happened, and holy Jesus, did the shit hit the fan! He said, "We got to talk." Pappy came down at 8:00, and he said, "Come on, you're going to go talk to the lawyer."

We go up to Pappy's office, and the lawyer's sitting there. He asked me what had happened, and I told him. He said, "Did anybody see you do it?"

I said, "Helen Feretto."

He said, "Were there any control board people there?"

I said, "Not to my knowledge."

Then he said, "Let's just forget it and see what happens." And nothing ever happened.

For quite a while, Harold Jr. booked the entertainment for the club. There were a lot of good shows on that sev enth floor in those days. Trini Lopez . . . I think that's where he got his big start; and Olivia Newton John, that's where she got her big start. Petula Clark played there. Another group was The Characters oh god, they were funny! There were some great shows up there.

The room was built specifically as a showroom, but it was not, in my opinion, built properly for shows of that nature, because the audience was right up to the stage, right in front of the entertainer. And for some reason, some of the co medians who appeared just did not come across.

When the seventh floor was built, it was going to be a VIP room you would have a gold key to get in. We went through our customer lists to determine who should be given a key, but the idea fell flat. Harolds seventh floor Fun Room just did not carry that exclusive appeal.

Pappy assigned a twenty one dealer to decorate the seventh floor. She came to work every single morning with her blond hair in a net, and it was absolutely perfect, and Pappy came in one day and said, "Get that girl off of that twenty one table! Anybody who can keep her hair that neat is going to be my interior decorator on the seventh floor." My jaw just fell open, but that's what he did. And that place was decorated like a whore house in distress. Red velvet curtains I mean, you would walk in there, and it just hit you right in the face. That lasted a week. Then Harold said, "Tear it all out. We're going to build this like a casino room should be."

Pappy's philosophy was, "We have enough smart people we can do any thing we want with the employees within



The seventh floor Fun Room. Carmen Cavallaro is at the piano, and Harold Sr. looks on from the left side of the stage.

the club." A classic example is the third floor restaurant. Jack and Rose Shaver Jack was a shift manager, and Rose was his wife were close personal friends of Paul Debus, who was the executive chef in one of the top hotels in San Francisco. Paul Debus offered to come in and set up the entire restaurant, buy all the equipment, hire all the chefs and train them for six months, free of charge, as a favor to Jack.

Pappy turned him down. He said, "We have enough smart people here. We can do it ourselves." Well, OK. As a result, the restaurant was built, and it was a fiasco, and they had to completely redo it, and it cost the club a ton of money. It also took quite a few years to really get it going.

I don't think there was any other ca sino where the owners were so visible in the gaming area. The Smiths had a way of doing business that nobody could un derstand. Pappy and the Smiths took gaming out of the closet and put it right out in the open because of their attitude. One of the Smiths was on the floor almost all the time.

Harold had a little apartment at the club, and he was the one we called if we had a real problem in the casino. Otherwise, we'd get a hold of Jim Hunter. Rarely would we call Pappy, but God knows how many hours Pappy would spend down there! He would spend a full day up in the office, and then he would come in during every shift to double the bets, so he was there a lot. The man had stamina. That's one of the many reasons that place was so successful.

Pappy had a rapport with the em ployees, and he created a loyalty to the club that I don't think you would see anywhere else in the industry. They just loved Pappy, especially the gals. Pappy was good to them he related to them. And the male population of the club liked Pappy, too. A little difficult to un derstand, because Pappy was unlike most casino bosses or casino owners.



"Pappy was unlike most casino bosses or casino owners."

Employee loyalty came mainly from Pappy, but Harold and Raymond complemented it. Later, when I worked at Harrah's, I didn't see that kind of loy alty towards management, towards Bill Harrah, or towards the club. Harrah's had a hell of a lot more discipline, but down right loyalty towards a family I've never seen anything like the Smiths had.

People would get in trouble; they would get divorced; they would be sick; and the Smiths were right there, genu inely interested in the welfare of their people. However, there was also a lack of discipline, and that lack of discipline created employees who took advan tage . . . not only of the Smiths, but also of the pit floor men. They knew that they could, because the Smiths would be there to smooth things over.

We treated our customers very well, too, gave them every break. If there was a miscue on a table, it was OK just pay them, and let's get on with the game. Sometimes the Big Six wheel on the sec ond floor would land right smack on the peg, with a win on one side and a loss on the other. Pappy would say, "Move it to where they win." It made the customer feel good, and Pappy felt that the club would get the money back. It was the loosest club in the state. When Hughes bought the place, his people called it a "fun house." Is there something wrong with having fun?

Harolds Club started a "Once Only" book. When a guy went broke, Pappy would give him enough money to get his butt home, and his name would go in the Once Only book, and he would never be eligible for this help again. Fifty dol lars was the maximum at first you would only give enough money for bus fare home. Then the "refunds" got bigger and bigger, and you couldn't control it, be cause everybody on the floor, including

Harold and Raymond and Pappy and Iola and whoever, could put people on the Once Only.

Even shift managers had the power to give a guy fifty bucks if he lost his en tire bank roll. We had to instruct him: "Now, for you to get on here again, you have to pay it back." Most of them didn't. Many years later, IRS attacked that book they disallowed the expense deduction, and it cost the club quite a bit of money.

Dealers had to shuffle a certain way and deal cards a certain way. They had to hold their deck up and not flash their hole card. There were procedures con trolling game protection, and we would enforce them, but there were no strict behavioral policies. Some dealers would sit to deal; some would stand.

So many things that were not allowed in strictly run casinos were allowed in Harolds Club. One reason was that we never had many pit supervisors. Oftentimes, floor men were supervising anywhere from eighteen to thirty games, and sometimes there was only one su pervisor for an entire floor.

I remember Don McDonnel calling one time and saying, "Goddamn it, when am I going to get a break?"

I said, "Don, I can't come up and break you. Who's going to watch the main floor?"

Bernie Einstoss, the longtime Reno and Lake Tahoe casino owner, came in once on a swing shift in the summer, and all the floors were packed. He said, "Dan, how many floor men do you have?"

"I have seven. I have three here, two on the second floor, one on the top floor, and one running breaks."

Bernie looked at me and shook his head. He said, "My joint's empty, and I have more floor men than you have." [laughter]

Pappy was smart enough in those days to realize that with this mass of people gambling, it would overcome any losses to stealing that might have been prevented with more floor men.

We had two signaling buttons under each table that could be activated by the dealer. We also had numbered boards throughout the club. When a dealer wanted a floor manager, she would step on a button that caused a bell to ring. The floor manager would then look up at a board and the number of the table needing a floor manager would be lit up. If the dealer wanted a cocktail waitress, she would step on the other button. A bell with a more dulcet tone would ring, and the board would light up with the table number in red.

The bell system was necessary, be cause Harolds Club was the only club, to my knowledge, that did not have any pits. We were called floor managers rather than pit bosses, because we had no pits and we roamed the entire floor. We used to assign sections, but some times when you had two guys and four sections, you both covered all of them.

Not having pits was Pappy's idea, and Harold was opposed to a lot of Pappy's ideas; very much opposed to some of them. On the second floor there was a little corner which led into the baccarat room. One morning Pappy said, "Why haven't we got a game here?"

I looked at him and said, "I don't know."

He said, "Find a twenty one table."

So, we found a twenty one table, we put it there, and he said, "Now, get me a dealer."

I said, "I don't have any spare deal ers."

He says, "Get that change girl over here!" So I go get her and open the table. [laughter]

That was Pappy's philosophy open a table, put somebody behind it, and teach her to deal in ten minutes. Unheard of in the industry . . . unheard of! Yet, look at the success he had. Of course, none of us saw the books, so I don't really know how much money they made. Did they make millions? Did they just squeak by? Did they spend more than they made? Those things I don't know. But when your store is full, full all the time, when every body else in town is crying, you're doing something right. Harolds kept having continual growth, continual expansion. It went across the alley to the Colony Club. It went up seven floors. There were restaurants and bars and continual ex pansion. It must have been doing well.

I remember going with Helen Feretto to the bank. Well, God knows how much money was in that cart, and here were Helen Feretto and I, going out the front door when the banks opened in the morning, down that sidewalk, no guards, no gun, no nothing. Just pushing a cart loaded with money. Everybody knew what was in it. Go into the bank and de posit it. Why we weren't ever held up, I don't know.



Dan Orlich amidst the forest of slot machines in the Roaring Camp Room, mid 1960s. *"It must have been doing well."*

For a long time, Harolds Club was the biggest in the industry. In the early 1950s, when we had seventy three table games, Pappy asked us to go to Las Vegas and count the table games on the Strip. The entire Strip had only 114 table games. In the fifties there weren't that many places on the Strip, but they were big, and they had hotels . . . and nobody could compare with the number of slot machines in Harolds Club, either.

Harold Jr. was never really given any position of authority in the 1950s. His authority was just implied as the son of Harold Smith Sr. Not until Pappy died in 1967 did he become the general manager. He sometimes overstepped his bounds, but rarely did he get away with it. Harold Sr. and Pappy kept him in line, but gradually, in the 1960s, he assumed a leadership role and some authority. Jim Hunter was demoted, given a position as a promotional director, and Junior became the casino manager. (A slap in the face to Jim, because he'd been the top man for a long time.) Then, when Pappy died in 1967, Junior became the general manager, and I took his place as the casino manager.

After Pappy died, two factions emerged. There was the Iola Smith faction, which included her son George, and there was the Harold Sr. and Junior faction. There were some tense moments, but Junior was the boss, and Senior was there as the driving force behind the club.

No question about it, Pappy's death was a great loss to the club, because Pappy had had such control. Harold Sr. had constantly referred to his father as the boss, and Raymond definitely considered Pappy the boss. With Pappy's death, there was a change in Harold's actions and his activities. All of a sudden, he was the so called boss, and he was not used to it. He was quoted as saying, "I can't run the club without my daddy."

At that time, there was talk of Harolds building a hotel on the property north and slightly east of the club. This is before Harrah's, and way before a lot of the hotels in town. But when Pappy died, we were of the opinion that the hotel would never go up. Even though we didn't voice it, we believed that Harold, with his drinking bouts and his gambling sprees, was not capable of taking over from Pappy, but we still didn't think anything would happen to the club it would just go on and on. But it was sold to the Howard Hughes corporation in 1970, three years after Pappy died.

Hughes and his second in command, Robert Maheu, bought the place, and then Carl Cohen came up as the guy who ran all of Hughes's gaming operations. Another guy that came to Reno was Maheu's lieutenant, a big, tall, former Los Angeles policeman. They came in said, "OK, there will be no changes. Dan will have the casino and the bars, and Bob Klaich will have the administrative." I should have known that the management structure wasn't going to stay that way, but it did for about four months.

Carl said, "I'll be in Las Vegas, but I want to be in touch with you on a daily basis." Naturally, I contacted him every day, and that was tough.

Because of my trap shooting, I knew several people in Las Vegas, and Paul Syphus was one of them. Paul was the top guy for Del Webb's Mint Casino in downtown Las Vegas. One day he called me and said, "Well, I just thought I'd let you know, Orlich, your new manager is going to be Jack Pieper."

I said, "How do you know this?"

"Well, the word is out down here that Jack Pieper is coming up to take over the place."

"Well, OK, who is Jack Pieper?"

Syphus said, "He ran the Silver Slipper for a while. He's one of Hughes's top people, and he's coming up to take it over."

So Jack came up and talked: "Dan, I've heard about you for several years, and we anticipate absolutely no changes. You and Bob Klaich are going to be right here. I want to tell you right now, neither of you have to worry about your jobs."

It lasted a year. But then in comes Bill Weir, in comes Richard Balkanny, in comes Jay Corn and various other guys. Changes started being made without our knowledge, things like new floor men in the pit, new twenty one dealing pro cedures, and various other things. I'd walk into the club and see this stranger in the pit, and I'd say, "Who are you? What are you doing in this pit?"

He would say, "Jack told me to come in here," or "Jay Corn told me to come in here," or "Billy Weir told me to come in. I'm the new pit boss."

And I'd say, "Oh, is that so?" And Pieper gave them signing privileges with out telling anybody . . . it became chaos.

Supposedly, I was in charge. I had the same position I had when the Smiths were there. I was the so called casino man ager, but Bill Weir was there and Jay Corn and a few others, and they were the ones that were in contact with Jack Pieper.

I stayed exactly one year after they took over. They took over July 1, and June 30 of the following year was when I was asked to resign. They asked Bob Klaich to resign in the morning, and then that evening they asked me to resign. They gave me one month's severance pay. Bob Klaich and I tried to get something going on our own, but nothing worked out. Finally, a year after that, I went to work at Harrah's.

14

Roy Powers

Roy Powers was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1922. When he was a year old, his family moved to southern California. Powers graduated from Hollywood's Fairfax High School, then served in the U. S. Coast Guard in World War II. Following his discharge, he took a ob with a small advertising agency in Los Angeles, continuing in the profession with the Thomas C. Wilson advertising agency after moving to Reno in 1947. In 1953 Powers was hired by the Riverside Hotel Casino to be its publicist and promoter of special events. He left this position in 1958 to head up adver tising and public relations for Harolds Club. As he re members it,

There was a falling out between the Wilson ad agency and Harolds Club. The Smiths and Guy Lent, who was then the general manager of Harolds, de cided that rather than find another ad agency, they'd create their own advertising department within the casino itself. That was a pretty revolutionary thing to do in those days.

Harolds Club placed ads in the *Wall Street Journal* and all the trade publications for advertising and pub licity in the western states. Those of us in the ad pub licity business in Reno thought they were sure to get some big city guy from New York to take the job, which was the biggest account in town.

Several weeks passed. One day Les Kofoed, who handled community relations and legislative lobby ing for Harolds, came into the Riverside, caught me in the lobby and said, "Guy Lent wants to know why you haven't applied for this job."

I said, "Les, you've got to be kidding! Guy wants to see me?"

"Yes, this afternoon."

I ran the two and a half blocks to Harolds Club, spent two hours with Guy, and came away with the job. My head was spinning; I couldn't believe this was happening! A whole world had opened up for me.

I gave the Riverside the shortest possible notice, because I was anxious to get to work. Guy and Les brought me in to Harolds Club and took me up to the second floor in the Ritz Building and showed me my office. Then they took me downstairs and introduced

me to a young lady who was working on the switchboard and said, "This is your assistant." Her name was Shirley Johnson, and she was a buxom redhead. All the guys would come in my office and say they were coming up to see me, but I knew they were coming up to see Shirley.

The department grew gradually. We started off with just the two of us, and by the time I left, I had forty some people working in the department. There was marketing, publicity, public relations, tourism, and sales. We also produced *Harold's Herald*, the in house magazine that was mailed out to customers and employees every month.

We were responsible for all of Harolds Club's advertising and publicity. Among other things, publicity included planting stories or staging stunts on behalf of your client or your employer to gain them exposure. Newspapers in those days were very receptive to this kind of publicity, and they loved to run pin up photos there was *always* room for another picture of a show girl sitting on the diving board at the Riverside Hotel. And it wasn't just the local papers if a story had enough gimmick to it, you could get on the wire services and plant it nationally. Las Vegas became *extremely* successful doing this sort of thing.

Advertising, on the other hand, was the creation and placement of an actual paid advertisement, whether it be a newspaper ad, magazine ad, outdoor sign, radio spot announcement or television spot announcement. In my day, the guy who was the advertising publicity guy did it all.

My department grew rapidly. I soon had writers and photographers and ad layout people a pretty good sized staff just in the advertising publicity department, and down the hall, I had people doing sales marketing. We would develop tour packages, create brochures. We had people that lived in Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, and they distributed these packages to local travel agencies and tour operators, then I would go before different groups up there and sign them up to come to Harolds Club by plane or by bus on one of our packages. We would book them into a local motel and pay the motel's rate. Participating motels had to be clean, modern, and up to date, but we were filling rooms all over town, and the motels were vying for our business. They loved us we were becoming active members of the community. Prior to this, people in the gaming industry were not accepted socially or as part of the community. It was almost like a racial thing. [laughter]

Before going with Harolds, I had already been fairly active in the community with my Jaycee work, and I had been selected the Young Man of the Year in town. The Smith family encouraged me to go further with that, so I didn't feel uncomfortable taking time away from my desk to attend civic meetings. As Junior Chamber of Commerce president, I arranged for all presidents of the Junior Chamber to sit ex officio on the board of the Reno Chamber of Commerce. It wasn't too long after that I was nominated for president of the Reno Chamber of Commerce and duly elected. The Smith family was just delighted! They thought they'd been purified because the community had finally accepted someone in the gaming business, and that really broke the ice. (Later, Charlie Mapes was president of the Chamber of Commerce, and also John Ascuaga became very active in the Chamber.)

I *really* got heavily involved. I was having a good time, and we were accomplishing a lot. It went back to Pappy Smith's philosophy, that if you advertise Reno and the people come, Harolds Club will get its share. Harolds was a huge sponsor of Chamber activities. Jud Allen, long time manager of the Chamber, often said he couldn't have done what he did with the chamber if it hadn't been for Pappy Smith and Harolds Club, because they put dollars where their mouth was. Harolds was cooperative and not critical, and if the Chamber came up with an idea, Pappy would always buy into it without question. If it didn't work, he'd talk to them about it, but he would never judge beforehand. Sometimes he'd have to put some more money into a project, but he was there to make those things work. He felt that in the long haul, it would be returned many times over to Harolds Club.

U. S. Highway 40 over Donner Summit was a two lane highway, and Cold War tension created concern that if there was ever any military threat to the Bay Area, it wouldn't be possible to evacuate people rapidly enough. To drive to Sacramento or San Francisco from Reno could take six or eight hours. You'd get behind trucks, or there'd be an accident on that narrow two lane highway, and traffic would block up something fierce. It sounds kind of far fetched now, but at the time there was a lot of concern about what the Russians might do to us.

The small town chambers of commerce along Highway 40 — it's now Interstate 80 — banded together to make a big noise with their congressional delegations in Washington to get something going to improve that highway. Some civic leaders from California came and talked to Mr. Smith, and he bought into it. His theory was that we would all write letters to our congressional delegations . . . but he knew you had to do more than that, so he came up with a highway sign program across Donner Pass that showed a truck in silhouette going up a hill with cars lined up behind it. The copy said, "Make this four lanes. Write your congressman or senator now." That went on for many years — it must have been a ten or twelve year effort before there was some kind of commitment from the government.

There were people on our staff who worked full time on that Interstate 80 project, reporting directly to Pappy. It was one of his favorite projects, and it became a reality, as everybody knows. When I 80 was completed, I drove Mr. Smith to the summit for the dedication ceremony. Everybody was there. It was snowing like hell, and it was cold, and he was getting along in years. They were all out patting each other on the back, and no one was paying any attention to him, so we brought him back down to Reno. We later put on a little party for him at the Sparks Nugget and got all the



civic leaders and everybody involved to pay tribute to Raymond I. Smith. He was overwhelmed.

The Smiths had a board meeting ev ery week, and I was automatically on the agenda. I would leave my staff with my arms full of ad concepts and publicity stories, and everyone would say, "Hey, good luck, Roy. Give 'em hell!" Pappy, Harold, Raymond A., and Harold Jr. fought all the time in these meetings. [laughter] It was embarrassing, the way they would fight amongst themselves. I would be the only non Smith there, and I thought I was privy to some family thing that I really shouldn't have seen.

Then they'd say, "OK, Roy, it's your turn." And I'd lay out all my proposals and, "Check, check, check, check." They gave me tremendous support. They were *very* easy to work with and very complimentary and very supportive of what I was doing. I'd come back to my office, and I'd give my staff the OK sign, and then everybody would applaud. "Yeah!" [laughter]

I didn't have a budget the Smith family, like the carnival people that they were, worked on intuition and gut feel ing, and it worked. When I took an idea to them at board meetings, they never questioned the cost. If it was a good idea, they'd just say "Let's do it." They would even endorse a bad idea. [laughter] We were never sure whether something was going to work or not, but they never complained. What mattered was that we tried and we were out there hustling to build our presence in the marketplace. There weren't many failures, though.

Harolds had entertainment in the sev enth floor Fun Room. It became enor mously successful, and it *shouldn't* have, considering where it was it was out of eye sight; it was tiny, but it was a fun place.

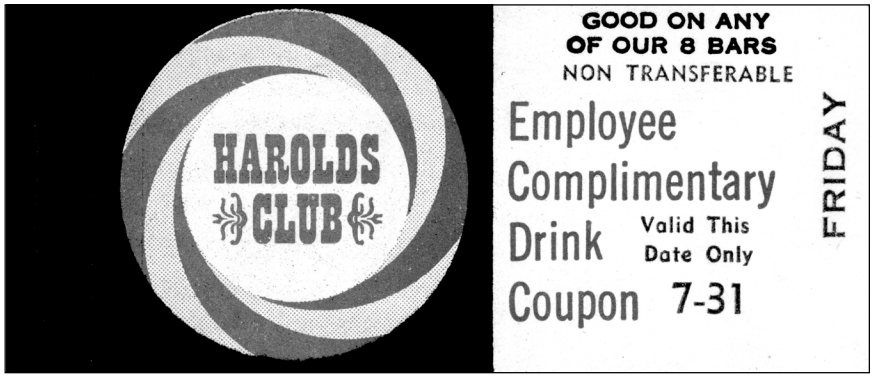
Harolds Club was extremely generous with complimentary drinks and compli mentary food. One time the show had finished, and Harold walked in. I was working the room, saying hello to people, shaking hands, and he called me over and said, "Looks like you got a lot of your friends here tonight, Roy."

And I said, "Yes, just happens to be that way tonight, Harold."

"Well, I hope you picked up their tabs."

"I haven't yet, but I was just going to do that."

He stood in the back of the room and nodded his head while I signed all their checks and bought the house. That was not without logic. Harolds felt that a free cocktail was one of the cheapest forms of advertising, and they built a tremen dous reputation on their generosity: "Let's tell these people we're happy they're here. We want them to gamble and



"Harolds Club was extremely generous with complimentary drinks." Even employees got comp drinks in a booklet handed out with pay checks.

have a good time, and if we can entertain them while they're here, that's the way it should be."

The Smith family was dedicated to seeing that their customers had a good time and *really* enjoyed themselves. They would go to any means to do that, and the payoff was in the gaming drop. If the customers were having a good time, they seemed to want to play the games. The Smith family had *set up* that mental attitude by being good to them. One way they were good to them was by providing top notch entertainment.

Harold Sr. had the final say on entertainment, but Junior got involved some. Bobby Burns, who was with MCA (Music Corporation of America), was our exclusive booking agent. I would travel with him sometimes when he would have an act that he wanted to see. I traveled with Harold too we went to Coconut Grove and other places to look at acts and decide if we were going to book them or not.

Harold Sr. took the entertainment thing to heart more than anyone else in the organization. I would make suggestions to him in a loose, informal way, and we would talk things over, and then he would say, "Go ahead." We booked very good entertainment into the Fun Room, especially when you consider its small size. (It would seat only about one hundred and fifty people.) We worked out its acoustical problems too the heavy, deep red drapes would absorb sound so it didn't hit those glass windows, and the little room contained all the music beautifully. There was good entertainment in the lounges, too. The Silver Dollar Bar on the second floor was an exceptionally successful little room for gambling action because of the popularity of the entertainment we booked in there.

We booked a great many stars into Harolds Club. Petula Clark had her American debut with us. We had the Harry James band, Don Cornell, Vic Damone, Dionne Warwick, Rosemary Clooney . . . when she had her famous bout with mental illness, it happened on the seventh floor of Harolds Club. We had Nancy Wilson, Jerry Vale, Louis Armstrong and many more.

Harolds Club used to have a Christmas for the Eagle Valley Home for Children in Carson City. Club employees would donate wrapped presents, and then volunteers from among the employees would truck them over to the Eagle Valley home. One year I arranged to have Louis Armstrong act as Santa Claus, and I got him a white beard and a hat and the whole thing. You can visualize a black man with those great big eyes and a white beard! The kids loved him. Louis was a quiet man, but he got into this. He had a wonderful time, and we made the wire services the picture of Louis Armstrong playing Santa Claus was irresistible, and we planted stories all over the country on that one.

Harold Sr. came to Reno in 1935 by himself. He opened a very small store, and he named it Harold's. It didn't do too well that first year. When his brother and their father, Raymond A. and Raymond I. (Pappy) Smith, came to town to help take it from there, it was decided to change the name from "Harold's" possessive to just "Harolds" Club it belonged to the family. So, from its second year of operation, "Harolds" was always spelled without a possessive apostrophe.

Reno's most famous advertising slogan was "Harolds Club or Bust." When Lyle Ball, of the Lyle Ball sign company in Reno, made the first highway signs, they were really ugly. They were just placed

around the Reno area. Then, when Tom Wilson entered the scene, the decision was made to expand the program and do it very professionally. The credit for "Harolds Club or Bust" belongs to Raymond I. Smith, but Tom picked up on the slogan and made these *incredibly* humorous and attention getting high way signs all kinds of cartoon charac ters fighting Indians and doing Old West things. The famous trademark of the cov ered wagon with all the stuff flying out the back end of it became the logo for the club.

"Harolds Club or Bust" had started before I arrived. We just took it and ran with it. On a long term basis there were about 2200 signs nationwide most of the time, and at one point there were 3,000 highway signs in the program. We had a full crew working east of the Mississippi and another working west of the Missis sippi. They had service trucks, and they had their itineraries and travel schedules. We would get locations, usually on farm land, and we would pay the rancher or farmer $10 a year to let us put a sign up. Sometimes someone would run off with a sign, and you'd see it on the side of a chicken coop or used for some other purpose. And cows would rub up against them to scratch their backs, and they'd knock them over. Or we'd get a phone call from a farmer somewhere in Iowa who would say, "Our sign fell down," so we'd send a crew out there and repair it. Our crews were on the prowl con stantly.

Our signs were small by highway stan dards, and when four lane highways, with their high vehicle speeds, spread over the nation, they were ineffective. Then Lady Bird Johnson started her high way beautification program, and Con gress passed a law that signs had to be a considerable distance from the cen ter line of a highway. Well, our little signs disappeared with that kind of distance. We still had all these locations, but we decided that it was probably time for the highway program to come to an end. I went back east to the 3M headquarters and negotiated the sale of the entire Harolds Club sign program to the 3M people.

The Pacific Northwest was famous for parades and festivals. For its publicity value, Harolds began entering expensive floats in many of the parades in the re gion. Those parades were the biggest thing people in some of the communi ties did all year long, and, when we be gan winning first prizes, they became very conscious of Harolds Club when they talked about Reno, Harolds Club was the next thing they said. Our busi ness from the Pacific Northwest *really* came alive when we started doing that.

We entered floats in Pasadena's fa mous Rose Festival parade on New Year's. One year we won first place for a city under 100,000 population, with some other qualifications. We used to take a delegation of local people down with us, and the organizers would treat us like kings and queens. And, of course, the Reno Rodeo parade and the Nevada Admission Day parade always had a float from Harolds Club.

When the annual Virginia City Camel Races started, the sponsors came to all the hotel casinos and said, "Would you sponsor an entry?"

We said, "Sure. That sounds like a great idea have a lot of fun with that." Harolds Club became *very* active in the races. Every year we would come up with a different jockey, and some of them were pretty unusual. One year we had a guy dressed in a gorilla suit riding a camel. Another time we had a World War I pilot with the goggles and everything.

His camel was named Sopwith. [laughter]

The ones that *really* went over well were the last couple that we did. We announced that we had discovered that camel racing was popular in the French Foreign Legion of North Africa and that Harolds Club had gone to great expense to bring the Legion's champion to Reno and Virginia City to be the jockey on the Harolds Club camel. And boy, we had a reception when he got off the train at the Reno depot! He was dressed in his light gray blue French Foreign Legion uniform, with the white towel on the back of his hat and the gold braid with his medals and ribbons. He had a nice big mustache that fit the occasion, steel blue eyes he was sensational.

I took "Lucky Pierre," as we called him, to service club meetings, and I took him to press conferences, and I got a tremendous amount of publicity. One night I had him over at Channel 8, KOLO TV, and Alan Abner was interviewing us on his live show. Alan said, "Roy, I notice that every time I ask Pierre a question, you answer."

I said, "Well, he doesn't speak English."

Alan said, "Do you speak French?"

"No, but before we took him out to meet everybody, I worked through an interpreter and got the answers to most of these questions."

Alan said, "Yes. Now it makes sense."

Betty Stoddard Muncie questioned me a bit when I took him to a Soroptimist club meeting, and she said the same thing, "He never speaks."

When he went up to Virginia City, "Lucky Pierre" was sensational. He won all the races. We took him back to Reno, put him on the train, and everyone waved goodbye. What they didn't know was that when the train got to Truckee, some of my people were waiting, and they brought him back to Reno, where



Alan Abner (left), "Lucky Pierre," and Roy Powers.

he got out of the uniform and went back to his job as stage manager on the sev enth floor of Harolds Club. His name was Ryal Bowker. He ran for governor one time . . . not too successfully, I might add. [laughter]

The next year we had to better that one. I came up with a story that in the nineteenth century, camels had been tried as beasts of burden in Virginia City. When this experiment failed, they re leased the camels into the wild, and they migrated north and ended up in Canada. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police had taken them in and bred them over the years, and they were still racing camels up in Canada.

I then announced that I had gone to great expense to bring the Royal Cana dian Mounted Police champion camel racer to Reno and Virginia City to ride the Harolds Club camel. So I present this *great* big guy . . . God, he must have been six foot five, and he had on that red tunic and dark blue pants with the red stripe down the side, and shiny black boots, and the hat that they wore, and I had him parading all over the place. He had a big, deep voice, just talked up a storm, and everyone fell madly in love with him, particularly one little girl reporter with the *Reno Gazette Journal*, Sherry Cross.

Our mountie won the race. Sherry Cross was broken hearted when he had to report back to his barracks in Canada. A few days later she was walking through Harolds Club, and she saw this guy that looked awfully familiar pushing a money cart around the aisles of the club. She made him confess that he was the Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman. He was a Harolds Club employee who worked in the counting room and pushed the money cart around.

Sherry called me, raging mad. [laugh ter] And with a tongue in cheek exposé in the paper, she called me a fraud and a liar. That was the end of my camel rac ing promotional career. I had a lot of fun.

We felt that many of the things we did promoted the city as well as the club. For example, we had outdoor signs in the West that only talked about Reno, but were paid for by Harolds Club. They would extol skiing in the winter and out door activities in the spring and summer months. This goes back to Raymond I. Smith's philosophy: If it was good for Reno, it was also good for Harolds Club.

We were involved in several major promotional efforts that brought a great deal of national and international atten tion to Reno. One of those was the Reno Air Races. That concept came out of the fertile mind of Bill Stead, who was a world champion hydroplane racer. He was also an aviator, and he'd long had a dream of reviving the national air races that had been held in Cleveland, Ohio, for many years, tragically ending when one of the pilots crashed into an apartment house. When Governor Grant Sawyer an nounced that the Nevada Centennial Committee was looking for a special pro motion to help draw attention to Nevada's centennial celebration, Bill Stead called him and said, "Well, I got it." He brought half a dozen of us to gether to discuss whether his idea might work. I was the only one who wasn't a flyer I think he called me into it because I represented Harolds Club's deep pock ets.

I went back to Harolds Club and sold them on it. They were a *major* contribu tor. So was Harrah's, and so was the Nug get, but Harolds Club was by far the larg est supporter of the air races in those

early years. I then became a member of the board of directors of the Reno Air Races, served for thirteen years and was chairman the last year I was on the board.

Harolds Club also sponsored a cross country air race, the Harolds Club Trans continental Trophy Dash, which I man aged and supervised. The race was from Clearwater, Florida, to Reno, and it took place a week before the Reno Air Races started. Harolds came up with $10,000 prize money and beautiful trophies, and it became a major event. Then, after five or six successful years, we discovered that we were losing entries in the Reno Air Races because of it. These guys were fly ing all out to try to capture the Harolds Club prize money, and they were burn ing up airplanes that were scheduled to fly in the pylon races. That wasn't good, so the cross country race was canceled.

The Reno Air Races weren't an instant success. We lost money the first year, so we went back and asked for underwrit ing money again the second year. We lost again the second year. The third year we started to come through and do a little better financially, and from then on it just went uphill and has had incredible growth.

The Smith family was excited about the 1960 Winter Olympics coming to town, and our involvement tied in with the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to bring fame and fortune to the Reno area as a result of the Olympics. Harolds Club created an Olympic center on the club's second floor at the top of the escalators. We were able to obtain a couple of AP and UPI wire service photo receivers for the center. They were photo teletype machines, so we had constant input from the wire services right there. We also had

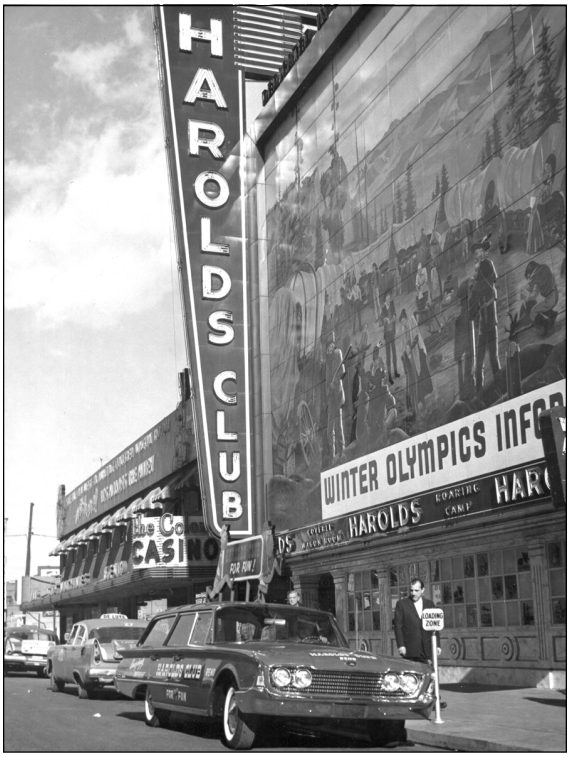


Roy Powers presents Harolds Club cross-country air race trophy to Dick Kestle.

a concierge service that told people about the events that were coming up at Squaw Valley and how to get tickets and where to buy them, and we also provided a shuttle service for our custom ers that ran back and forth to Squaw Valley daily.

We put flags of all the Olympic na tions around the top rim of the club, and everyone in the club all the dealers, anybody who dealt with the public had badges on identifying the country they were from and the languages they could speak. It worked out to be a great event, and everyone got involved in it. We had a lot of press guests that we invited to the headquarters at the club, and we got them extra credentials. Some of our better customers received admission tickets and seats.

Nineteen sixty was also the twenty fifth anniversary of Harolds Club, and they



"Harolds Club created an Olympic center on the club's second floor"

opened a gaming room called Room 25. That's where they introduced baccarat. It was designed to be more appealing to the high rollers, and it served its purpose. I don't think it was a huge success, but we got a lot of good press out of it.

David Wolper was a prominent Holly wood producer of documentary televi sion shows, one of which, *A Story of* was broadcast on ABC. The series in cluded stories of a fireman, a boxer, and on down the line. Sometime in the late 1960s, the Wolper people called my of fice and asked if we would be interested in working with him on a story of a gam bler. I said I would pursue it. I put it be fore the Smith family, and they endorsed it 100 percent. It became quite a project, and it was a lot of fun.

We worked hard at it for probably a month. We worked on different segments at different times, but Harold was the fo cal person he was the gambler that they were interviewing. I had a scene in it where I was at my desk in my office, and Harold was talking about some of the promotions we'd done in the past.

In another situation, they wanted me to put together a poker game with some of the heavy players in the Reno area. We rented a suite in the Holiday Hotel, and the players were Harold Sr., Virgil Smith, Dr. John Becker, Hugh Rauhut, and Joe King, a land developer from Lake Tahoe. They locked themselves into this room, and I was there with the camera crew. They played all night, and they kept sending me downstairs for more chips I had to sign for $25,000 worth of chips at a time. Before the night was over, I was getting a little worried. The game finally ended at dawn with Virgil Smith and Harold Sr. in a winner take all hand, and Harold won it. It wasn't staged.

Win or lose, I don't think Harold would have been comfortable with a staged game. One night he went across the street to the Horseshoe Club, and the cameras followed. We had to get per mission to shoot from all the players on the dice table. Harold was shooting dice and just had terrible luck, just could not make it work, and after losing $16,000, he packed up and left. That wasn't his night.

We also did a movie at the club called *Five Against the House*. It was pro duced by Columbia Studios and starred Kim Novak, Brian Keith, and Guy Madi son. I was with the Thomas Wilson agency at the time, but Guy Lent asked that I be assigned to the project. Every day when the shooting was finished, I would fly to Hollywood with the day's rushes. The stu dio would meet me at the airport, take



In the Roaring Camp Room, a scene from Columbia Pictures' 1954 movie, *Five Against the House*. Guy Madison, the film's star, is at center, surrounded by two other actors (stage left) and employees of Harolds Club.

me into a projection room, and I would view the film that had been shot that day. Then I would have to tell them whether it was something that Harolds Club would want in the film Guy Lent insisted that we be that careful with it.

That was a tiring period in my life. It was hectic traveling, and then I'd have to be back the next day to be there with the camera men and the director to watch all the events that were being filmed. Some of those shots were made at the Pigeon Hole parking garage, which meant we worked late at night, and that caused me to lose a few pounds.

Some nice people were involved in that movie, and I made a lot of good friends. I was having dinner one night at the Beverly Hilton Hotel by myself, and Brian Keith spotted me across the room and came over and sat down with me, had a cup of coffee, talked about our experiences with the movie. Nice gentle man.

Another promotional effort was a book called *I Want to Quit Winners* that

Harold Smith Sr. wrote in 1961 with John Wesley Noble. On that project, I felt like a circus advance man. After the book was published, we made arrangements for Harold to take a nationwide tour, and I set up television and radio interviews and autograph sessions at bookstores throughout the United States. We went to New York, Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, Dallas . . . quite a tour. I would go to a specific market and make all the arrangements, and then Harold would come in after I'd been there two or three days. I would review what his itinerary was to be, and I'd usually follow him around so that he would have any assistance I might be able to render.

I got to know Harold quite well as a result of that tour I spent a lot of time with him. He seemed to enjoy that period. The book actually made the bestseller list, too, for a short period of time. Didn't go all the way to the top, but it was on the *New York Times* bestseller list. I think Harold gave away as many copies as he sold, but he was very proud of that book. It meant a lot to him.

Harolds Club was noted for its give away of matches, ashtrays, calendars, et cetera. To restaurants, they also distributed free placemats that had a map of Highway 40 highlighting Reno and Harolds Club. These weren't direct expenses out of my advertising allocations . . . but, as I said before, there really was no budget, so it didn't make much difference. Nonetheless, the cost, over time, must have run to hundreds of thousands of dollars. There was a local Lion Match sales representative whom Harolds Club had to have made a wealthy man.

We would have people on salary going up and down the Highway 40 corridor, stopping off at restaurants and coffee shops and gas stations, what have you, any place that tourists might be stopping, to drop these off and encourage people to visit Harolds Club. We also worked Highway 395, from Los Angeles, San Diego, all the way through Portland and Seattle to Vancouver, British Columbia. A heavy program, and soon everyone started doing it. It was copied extensively, particularly by Harrah's, but Harolds was more aggressive in their distribution program.

We had a warehouse alongside the railroad tracks near Coney Island Drive. The supplies were brought in there by the trainloads, and we would distribute them by station wagons. We had gentlemen who would fill up the back end of their wagons and take off, and we wouldn't see them for weeks.

There used to be a big outdoor sports show in San Francisco, in the McCormick Center, and Harolds Club had a booth there. We had a magazine called *Pull*. It was published by Harolds Club, and it advertised trap and skeet shooting. In the booth we would have people taking subscriptions to the magazine and promoting the Reno area, along with brochures about Reno and Harolds Club.

One year I took several pieces from the Harolds gun collection down to the sports show. One rifle was quite ornate and elaborate, so we made up some story that it came from the Mexican royal family and had been used to assassinate the king of Mexico. [laughter] I didn't even know if there *was* a king of Mexico. I would have the Brinks armored car deliver the rifle every morning, and in the evening, just before the show ended, the Brinks truck would come back and pick it up again. They would drop it by my hotel and leave it at the front desk. [laughter]

In my time at Harolds Club, other casinos developed public relations or publicity departments. They were run by men such as Fred Davis with the Sparks Nugget, Mark Curtis with Harrah's, Harry Spencer with the Mapes, and later on Gene Evans with Harrah's and the Mapes. These guys were well known, not only around town, but all around northern Nevada and California, and each was identified with a particular casino.

It's a mystery to me why that situation doesn't exist any longer. Back then the clubs encouraged us to become ambassadors of good will and spreaders of the big word. We PR guys were on television and radio shows in California, Seattle, and Portland, constantly out beating the drum, doing publicity stunts that would draw attention. I think we did an outstanding job. It was an era that really marked the height of the Reno promotional effort.

The Reno Chamber of Commerce promotional committee was a catalyst for bringing all these people together. We'd sit down at a table and work out community wide promotional programs, one of which was the Fun Flight. It was *enormously* successful, and all the hotels participated in that.

The Fun Flight was a promotion that began in the Bay Area and then later expanded into the Pacific Northwest. It was a two day, three night package that was very inexpensive. It would include shows, food, gaming coupons, and a discounted airline ticket. United Airlines worked with us on this project, and they said that to their knowledge it was the most successful program of its type. United was the only airline involved, because it was about the only airline that served Reno in those days.

The Fun Flight lasted several years. Harolds Club had a similar little program, just an overnighter, where we had a guy in the San Francisco area going to all the bars and telling customers, "Hey, finish your night at Reno." He'd give them a free airline ticket to Reno, but they had to leave by dawn the next morning. The guys loved it and had a great time. When they got to Harolds Club, on the second floor in the Covered Wagon Room, we had tables with sandwiches and coffee, gaming chips, and drink coupons.

We were very successful with that, and our bus programs were huge. Harrah's and Harolds, I think, were the earliest bus program operators. A gentleman named Richard Lee, an Oriental from the Oakland area, come to us with a proposal to bring Oriental customers to Harolds Club. He had offices in Oakland, San Francisco, Marin County, Contra Costa County, and we subsidized all these offices. We paid his rent, his telephone bills, his advertising expenses, and he came with a herd of people on those busses, I'll tell you! [laughter] It was incredible to watch.

Another promotion was called the Fun Train. Don Burke, an ex Forty Niner football player, came to work for the Chamber of Commerce, and he went to Jud Allen with the idea of creating a weekly train fun trip. It would leave the Oakland depot about six thirty, seven o'clock on Friday night and get into Reno at two or three o'clock in the morning. It was a big train with a lot of cars. They had a dance car, had a little band, a little trio, and the booze would flow. I took that trip a couple of times, and I'll tell you . . . ! [laughter]

I'd make a pass through the whole train, introduce myself, and hand out free drink coupons for Harolds Club. Then I'd go to a club car where people like myself and others who were working with the train could go to relax. After a couple of hours, I'd say, "Well, maybe I'll go back

and see how our customers are doing." They'd all be passed out, but when they arrived in Reno, they'd come swarming off the train and, "Whoopee! Let's have fun."

That era was very promotionally ori ented there was something going on all the time. Other casinos were joining in these things on their own, too; they had their own packages. The Nugget was also very active with its bus program. Collectively, the casinos were doing a great job of bringing people to Reno, and I'm not sure why that still doesn't happen.

The Chamber also sponsored famil iarization tours, or Fam Tours, as we called them. Those of us in the promotional and sales end of the gaming business would visit various cities and put on a cocktail party reception and invite the local travel agents, the local travel press, and the airline executives from that area. Hun dreds of people would show up for these things. We'd bring entertainers with us and put on little shows for them. It was just a way of keeping our name out in front, distributing brochures and litera ture, introducing new packages that we had developed.

We took those tours twice a year, and a representative from each of the major hotels that was active in the Chamber promotional committee went on each tour. They would go along and do their own thing maybe have their own table with their own brochures but the main thrust was always Reno. We pushed Reno, "The Biggest Little City in the World." At one time there was a feeling that was an improper slogan for the town, and that it should be abolished. Ron Smith, who was working for the Chamber of Commerce, said it was an outmoded, old fashioned slogan, and he got a lot of bad press. He had to put an apology up on the reader board outside the Chamber office and promise never to do that again. [laughter]

I had a young family, and Harolds would often invite me to take Jackie with me on these trips. It was good that the people we visited saw that not every body in the gaming business was some kind of a cigar smoking hood I had a nice family and spoke like the rest of the world does. We had a lot of fun and en joyed our very active lifestyle.

Another project that the casinos united behind was the erection of a new Reno Arch in 1963. Guy Lent said that the arch looked kind of tired, and that it was dwarfed by the larger buildings around it. He asked me to look into replacing it with something more colorful, more mod ern. I kicked the idea around and talked to a few people and got some support, and then I talked to the Ad Art sign com



Jackie Powers. *"I had a young family, and Harolds would often invite me to take Jackie with me on these trips."*

pany. Oakley Jordan was their sales rep from the Bay Area, and Oakley and I worked closely together developing the design concept and taking it to the city council for approval. Then I went out among the hotel casinos in the immedi ate area and had to raise $100,000 to pay for it. That's all it cost; I couldn't be lieve it.

The only organization that would not participate was Harrah's, and I've never understood that. Maybe it was because the idea didn't come from Harrah's. Harolds put up the majority of the money, and the others put up smaller amounts. We got the design approved, and the city council agreed that if it was paid for outright and deeded back to the city, then they would maintain it.

On New Year's Eve we had a grand arch lighting. We had a large slot ma chine up on a stage, and at midnight Mayor Hugo Quilici came up and pulled the handle. It was rigged up so that the reel stopped on three pictures of the new arch, and the arch lights went on at the same time. Everybody cheered. Had a street dance until one o'clock in the morning.

Pappy Smith is credited with originat ing many of the advertising gimmicks and promotions that were used by Harolds Club. He was the father of the big ones, but he also supported things that we would come up with, and he gave us the money to make them work. And he was a genius there was no doubt about it.

Pappy was a carnival operator, and yet he had a natural instinct for what made people happy. He knew how to treat them well and how to make friends with them and make sure that they would come back and see him again. He was a perfect fit for the job he held.

Harold Sr. had his own personal pro motional interests. He had an interest in classical music and played the violin him self; not well, but he played the violin. So he put on a series of concerts, partially to try to bring some dignity to Reno, try to position Reno as not just a gaming town, but a town that also had some culture. We had concerts at the Manogue High School auditorium, and he would compensate the school hand somely for letting us use the hall.

He booked entertainment like Lili Pons, Isaac Stern, the violinist, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, and others. I understand he had to pay them big bucks, and he would pay the Manogue students to serve as valet parking attendants and ushers. We had Reno's first remote tele vision show from one of those concerts, and that was a major breakthrough for Channel 8.

They were festive evenings, and people would come from far and wide. It was a black tie, formal event. Harold would always have us move the luxuri ous chairs from the club's seventh floor Fun Room and put them down in front they were the loge seats. Then he gave almost all the seats away. One year he decided to raise the prices of the loge seats, and still he gave them all away. [laughter]

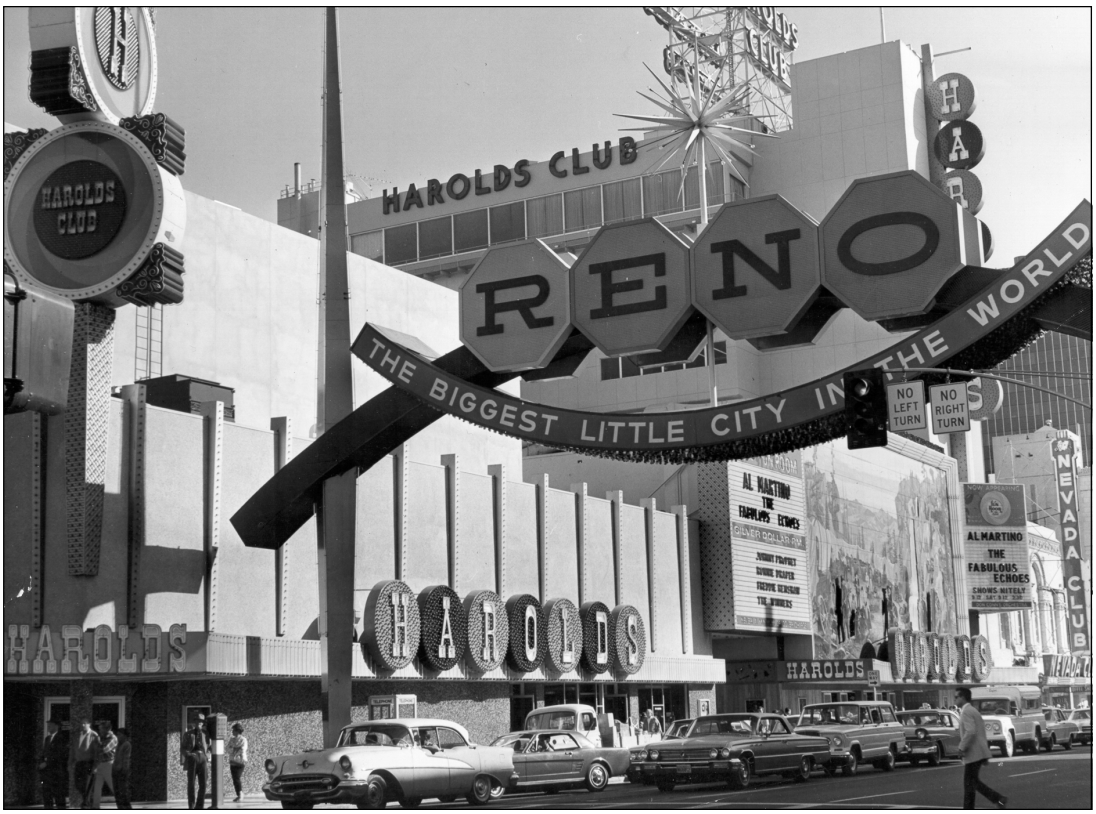
The concerts were a big item. We had searchlights, the police were there to regulate the crowds, and it was a great event. Harold always had big receptions afterwards for the stars in Harolds Club or in the Shore Room at the Holiday it was quite a nice facility in those days. He would take over that room, have a late dinner party, and he was in his glory when he did this.

The concerts didn't actually do Harolds Club any good as far as play in the casino was concerned they were for the local people mostly. He wanted



At right: Reno arch dedication with plaque. Roy Powers at left.

Below: The new arch: "*. . . something more colorful, more modern.*"



to give something back to the commu nity, and they appreciated it. The tickets were for sale, but no one ever bought one. [laughter] He gave them all away.

Harold Jr. was not very promotion minded. He didn't contribute much in the way of promotional input. He had his own agenda, and we didn't see too much from him in the promotional area. He liked to play host to the entertainers, and he did some of the booking, but he was not too reliable. He wasn't there all the time.

Raymond A. was a beautiful man, but he could have cared less whether the club opened the next day or not. He was very quiet, very soft spoken, a real gentleman, and he did not contribute much of anything. Harold Sr. was such a dominant personality compared to Raymond A.! Of course, Raymond I. was the strongest one of the three.

When Pappy Smith passed away in 1967, my job changed dramatically. It went downhill. Pappy Smith gave the club a stability that Harold Sr. couldn't bring to the table. Things became much more radical, out of control. We contin ued with most of our promotions Harold Sr. was receptive that way but it just didn't have that same management style. And Guy Lent brought so much to the table, and he was so harmonious with Raymond I., that when both of them were gone, there was really just nothing left. You could almost feel the doom coming, feel that the end was not too far off.

15

William Salas

William (Bill) Salas was born in Jerome, Arizona, in 1935. In 1941, his father, who was a printer, contracted lead poisoning, and the family moved to Reno to be with relatives. Bill's father got a ob with Bell Telephone of Nevada, and his mother worked as a beauty op erator for Hazel Close until she opened her own shop on Mt. Rose Street.

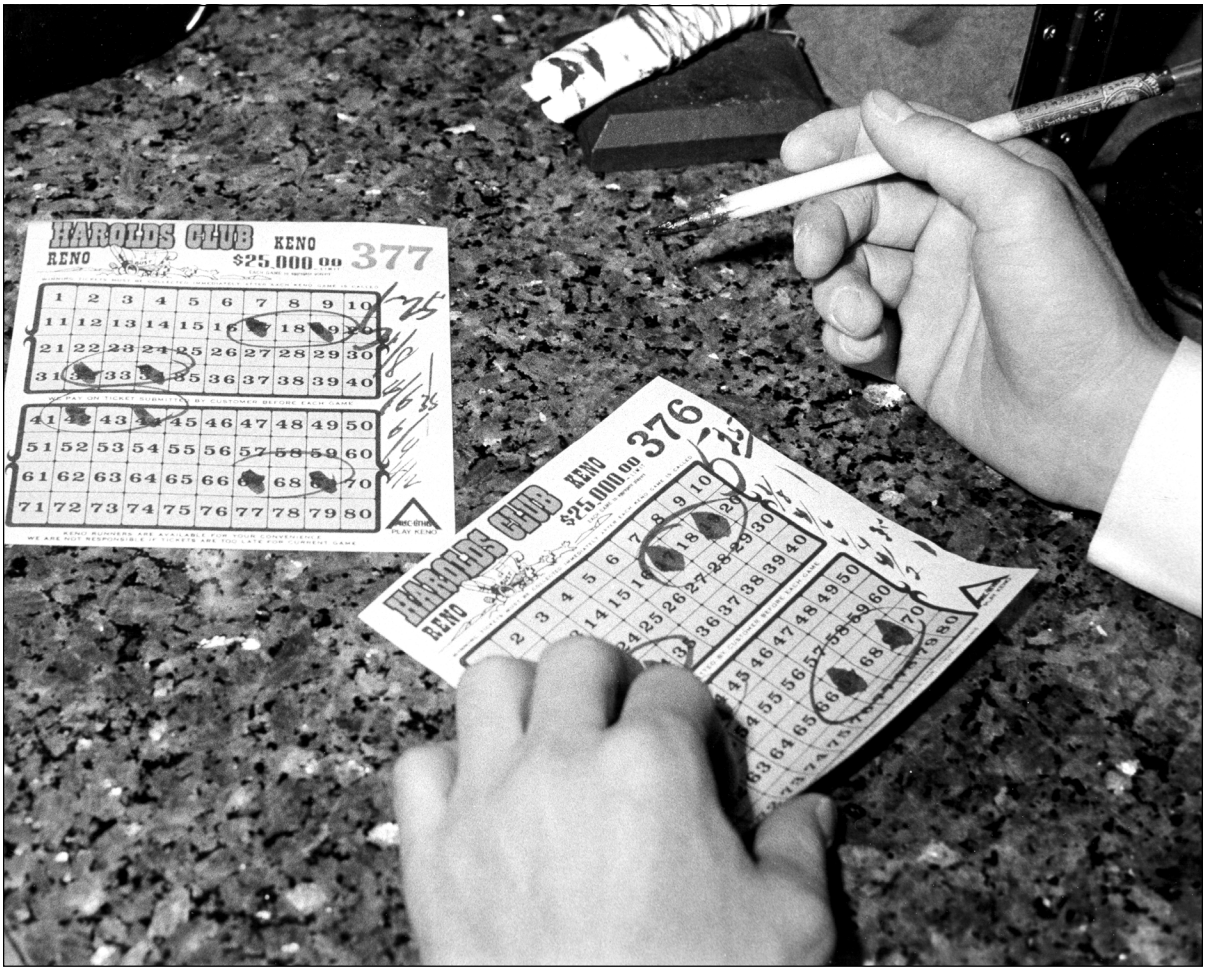
Bill graduated from Reno High School in 1954 and briefly attended the University of Nevada before en listing in the navy. When his navy hitch was up, he returned to the university, taking a ob at Harolds Club to help pay for his education. As he remembers it,

I went to work in the keno department at Harolds Club in 1959, earning $12 for an eight hour shift. There was no real training they just put me on a counter, gave me a babysitter and an ink brush, and said, "Start writing; start learning your payoffs." My number splotches were horrible, and I must have ruined five brushes the first night. They're very delicate, those Chinese horsehair brushes.

At that time keno writers had to figure the "way" tickets in their heads, and an experienced keno writer was worth his weight in gold. That was before calcu lators were invented, but I had taken algebra and calculus in college and had learned how to use the slide rule, and that was almost as good as having a calculator. Even so, it took me a year to fully learn the game, to learn how to figure way tickets and all the different combinations.

Keno was such a specialized game that learning it was even more difficult than learning to deal craps, and keno customers could be more knowledgeable than a novice writer. Once you play the proposition bets on a crap table, you know them backwards and forwards no matter what denomination you're play ing, you know what you're going to get paid. It's the same thing with keno.

If a customer came up with a way ticket, you fig ured he had studied that ticket to where he knew what he had coming. He might not know what any other way ticket pays, but he knows what *his* pays. He's got that one down pat. Not long after I started, some guy came up with a three way eight, which is



"They were very delicate, those Chinese horsehair brushes."

one of the simpler tickets, and I thought he was trying to cheat the club, because I had never seen one before. Of course, I was new, but I was also quite skeptical of the whole gambling business.

The most difficult ticket to figure was one called a Heinz ticket, which was a 57 way ten, played with groups of fives, fours, threes, twos, and single spots. You would have a combination of groups, and you would have to figure out each way possible of making a ten out of the groups available to you. Ten cents a way was the minimum amount of money you could play on a ten spot ticket.

There was a limit that a writer could pay on a winning ticket I believe it was $10. Anything over that, you would call it in to the desk. On the desk, the "first man" (or "number one man") would go through *every single* ticket, check it, and if it had a pay, he'd write the pay off on the ticket. He had a "draw," a keno ticket with the winning numbers punched out, and he'd go over every ticket looking for matches.

Every ticket had a number on it. A writer might turn around and say, "Pay ing $14.80 on ticket 6789," and the desk man would say, "No, it's $12.40," or some

thing like that. Then both of you would refigure it, and the writer would say, "Sorry, you're right," or the desk would say, "I made a mistake. You're right."

While the first man on a keno game checked tickets that were played for that game only, the "second man" (or "number two man") was checking carryover tickets. Carryovers were tickets that had been put in to be played for 100 games, or 20 games, or as many as a player wanted. Every time the number two man found a pay on one, he would write it up in the corner of the ticket. After that ticket had run its course, he'd total everything up and put it into a bin, which was marked for certain games. So if somebody says, "Carryover on game 57 . . . ," you would call back the total payoff that they had. Normally, the carryover customers had already checked their tickets and knew what they had coming, so if you had missed one, they'd call your attention to it real quick.

Carryover tickets were eventually outlawed. With the new ruling, a player had to be paid at the completion of every game, and if a ticket wasn't turned in within an allotted amount of time, you had the option of not paying it. They got around that by saying the customer was in the bathroom and couldn't get back to the counter in time to collect the ticket, but he was supposed to pick up his winnings prior to the start of the next game.

Back before they were banned, there were an awful lot of carryover tickets. Dealers from other clubs would come in and mark 100 game tickets, go to work, and, at the end of their shift, come back and check their tickets. As a matter of fact, I believe many of the twenty one dealers in Harolds Club were playing carryovers, dealing twenty one, and watching the keno board at same time! [laughter]

The 1931 bill legalizing gaming in Nevada didn't permit lotteries, and the truth is that keno is a lottery. To get around the law, casino operators simply named the game "race horse keno" and pretended that they were operating a racing game similar to those found in carnival concessions. Thirty years later, when the federal government legalized off track betting and began taxing the proceeds, operators decided to drop the horse racing pretense.

When I started working at Harolds Club, the game was still called race horse keno. The name of a horse was printed below each of the eighty numbers on the ticket. Amos was one of the names. We would call the games as if they were races: "And at the half way mark, it's number 10 on Malachai . . ." down to the last row of numbers, which is the last five, and I'd say, "And in the stretch, it's number 3 on Amos." When I called it out, I'd pronounce it A mose, with a long O. I got kidded for that.

Fred Beck had been instrumental in getting the Smiths started in gaming, and in return, he was given the keno game at Harolds Club to operate. Following Fred's death his widow, Jessie, became the owner and operator of the keno game. There's hearsay that from the beginning, the arrangement rested on nothing more than a handshake with the Smiths.

Although located within the club, the keno game was a completely independent entity. In fact, the Harolds Club floor bosses used to wear gray suits, and keno supervisors used to wear brown suits; that's how much difference there was. Keno supervisors could get suit after suit,



Fred Beck (gray suit) and Harold Sr. (visor) at the bar, c. 1946. Dorothy Smith gazes up at her husband from the right.

and Jessie would pay for all of them, as long as they were brown.

Jessie said if a Harolds Club floor man told us what to do, we should go ahead and do it, but tell her. It wouldn't hap pen again. Of course, if a floor man came up and said, "Listen, you missed a customer over there," we'd break our fanny trying to get that customer in the game and give them good service. It was a workable situation. Nothing was written down in black and white, but we got along.

In ascending order, this is the table of organization for Jessie Beck's keno game: runner or writer, relief station mas ter, station master, third man, second man, first man, relief (or assistant) shift supervisor, shift supervisor, assistant keno manager, keno manager, general man ager. Every position from relief station master to keno manager bore some su pervisory responsibilities, but each shift supervisor was in charge of the keno busi ness for his shift.

Jessie's general manager was her son, John E. Brown, and her keno man ager was Augie Landucci. The keno su pervisors when I started were Dick Cripes, Roy Harwood, and Warren De Maris. About a year later, Warren left, and Spud

Riley took his place. I started as a writer and received my first promotion to relief station master about two years later. Other promotions followed approxi mately every year after that. I was a re lief shift supervisor when Harolds Club was sold to the Summa Corporation.

John E. Brown was like a CEO he would oversee the supervisors, and he was directly in charge of the daily op eration of the game. If someone was to be promoted, he would promote him; if there was a policy change, he would make it. He was one of the most knowl edgeable keno men I ever met. He knew the game inside out and could even pre dict when a ticket would be hit. His mother knew the game too, but she was usually in the offices or roaming around, being a good will ambassador on the floor with everybody.

Keno was the only game in which the payout limit was controlled by the state. In other words, the Colony Club couldn't just say, "We're going to have a $50,000 limit," and Harolds Club couldn't say, "Our limit is going to be $30,000." You had to have a double bankroll in reserve if your payout limit was $25,000, you had to have $50,000 cash on hand so that you could, if necessary, pay out a double winner on back to back games.

There was also an aggregate limit, and, in all keno games, you would see a notice at the bottom of the ticket that the aggregate limit was $25,000. In other words, if two people hit $25,000 on the same game, they would be paid no more than $12,500 each. Legally, they could be paid even less, because other smaller tickets could be in that $25,000 aggregate, but Harolds Club never sub tracted the smaller payouts first. As a matter of fact, we once paid out three $12,500 tickets in one game.

The limit when I started in keno was $25,000 on an eight spot ticket. That ticket became very popular, because a couple of people hit it, and their wins were advertised so well that people saw that it *could* be hit, whereas the ten spot is an *awful* hard ticket to hit.

I've heard that the Nevada Club's keno game was the first to put in a 55 cent eight that paid $12,500 and a $1.10 ticket that paid $25,000. Harolds Club followed suit, and when I was there we paid quite a few of those limit tickets we were paying them off quite regularly, as a matter of fact. Of course, with each one you paid, you got plenty of public ity. The more publicity you got, the more people wanted to play that ticket, and, consequently, it was the mainstay of the keno game.

In Harolds Club, the main station of the keno game was on the first floor, by the escalator in the center of the club. It had thirteen windows, one of which was dedicated to the restaurant they would do nothing but write those tickets.

Station 2 was on the second floor at the head of the escalator. It had, as I re member, seven windows where you could write keno, but only three of them were used during a normal day of op eration. Then you had Station 3, also on the second floor, which was a little big ger I think it had nine windows. We had another station on the seventh floor, and I believe that was a three window sta tion. On a busy day, you could load all the windows up on all the stations.

There were pneumatic tubes going to each station, so you could send carriers up and down to the main floor. When the writer on the restaurant window got a ticket sent down by pneumatic tube, he'd write it and send a copy back up. Then the runner would take it to the diner who was playing.



The main keno station. Pneumatic tube for delivering keno tickets from other stations and the restaurant is clearly visible in front of keno runner at far right.

At the closing of a game, the main station on the first floor would say, "Send your tickets down." They would staple the tickets with heavy staples, roll them up, put them in the pneumatic tube, and send them down. Once we received *all* the stations' tickets, we could start the next game.

A lot of tickets were played through keno runners. A runner could drop her tickets at any open window, but the writer on the window wouldn't necessar ily write all the tickets. If the number one man said, "Marie, help out JoAnne," then Marie might get five tickets from JoAnne, write them up, and deliver them back to her. The writer would give them back to the runner in a group, in the same se quence that they were delivered.

(Some of the runners eventually be came writers JoAnne ran before she became a writer. When we got married in May of 1961, it wasn't advisable for both of us to work in the same club, so she went over to the Primadonna. Later she became a keno supervisor there, and then a manager when Del Webb took over.)



JoAnne and Bill Salas.

It was hard to coordinate everything. That was the largest keno game in the world, to my knowledge. It had more people running it, more out stations, and the biggest write of any keno game in existence at that time. There was a lot of stress on everybody.

Seven of the shift supervisors died over a short period while I was there, and that was one factor in my promotion to supervisor. Roy Harwood . . . I believe he had cancer; Dick Cripes had cancer; Jody Wiedermann, Roy Conner, "Sleeps" They died of various illnesses. Tracy Nichols was putting on his shoes getting ready for work and dropped dead of a heart attack. Spud Riley had a heart attack up at station two, right on duty.

It must have scared Jessie pretty bad, because after those supervisors dropped dead on her, she sent the rest of us down to Sampson Clinic in Santa Barbara. All expenses were paid, salary was given, and we went for a full week's check up. When I walked in the doctor's office down there, they said, "Well, what are you here for? What's your trouble?"

I said, "I don't know why I'm here. I just need a check up." And so they ran me through the whole thing, and that included an eyes, nose, and ear man, stomach man, blood man, everything complete check up. To my knowledge, Jessie never got a copy of it. That was strictly for our information.

The supervisor, the man in the brown suit, was in charge of the keno shift. His job was to coordinate the game. If one station wasn't keeping up with the rest of the stations, he'd want to know why. Perhaps they had a guy playing a multitude of tickets, and the writers that they had couldn't handle it. He would go up there and check on it and call down to the main floor, say, "Send two more writers up here," or, "I'm sending a bunch of tickets down to be written." And if he had an argument or a discrepancy on a game, or a keno runner was taking too long

One time this runner in the restaurant was taking *forever* to get her tickets in. We kept calling her and couldn't get an answer. Finally she came in and sent the tickets down. I went up there and asked her, "What's the holdup? What's happening?"

She said, "Bill, I can't run across the street any faster. The people couldn't get in here to eat, so they went over to the Horseshoe, and I'm running their tickets."

I said, "Oh, God, no! You can't do that!" It was illegal, so we put a stop to it and got the game going. [laughter]

The supervisor would make the schedule for the week. He would say how many writers there were going to be at the different stations, but it was with the approval of Augie Landucci, the over seer he knew all functions, all the holi days coming up. The overseer was the go between between John Brown and the game itself. He would actually go in and coordinate the game, and if we got into trouble and couldn't reach John Brown, Augie Landucci is the man we'd try to reach.

We had a schedule you had to be there when we wanted you there. It was usually an eight hour shift, and you didn't know what station you'd be working. When you got there, the first man would say, "OK, you're on station two, you're on this one, you're on that one," and you'd go to the stations you were work ing, with the exception of the station boss, the station master, who was the next thing to the second man. He would always have his regular station.

You had what some games called the desk man, but we at Harolds Club called the number one man. Then you had the number two man, and he was on the desk too. And later on, when we got the center aisle in the main keno game downstairs, we had three men on the desk. Two were on the desk facing Virginia Street, the right hand side of the station, and one was on the left hand side.

The man on the left hand side was the number one man. He had a closed cir cuit television monitor, so that he could monitor each station upstairs. He could see what the action was, how fast they were progressing, if somebody was dog ging it, or if somebody was swamped with tickets. The other two men would check the tickets. By then, there were no carryovers, so one was up there to do the main floor run, and the man across from him was there to check the station's tickets and then help with the main floor tickets.

The number one man would hustle the game and get it going. He would say, "Game 52, station two. We're ready. Do you need help? Last call for game 52 coming up. Keno game 52 coming up." Something like that. You would keep pumping the game over the loud speaker all the time, so that it would hurry people in, and at the same time attract people.

There was an assigned caller that called every game. The caller stayed at one window, usually in the very front of the cage. (We still had the squirrel cage that we called from.) The puncher would be on the second window in on the right hand side, facing Virginia Street. The man that worked the first window on the left hand side, coming in the back door of the keno complex, was the man who changed the paper he would be re sponsible to pick up last game's paper.

The number one man would check every bin to make sure it was empty, because we did not want to write a ticket on last game's paper then we could really be in trouble! Of course, our time clock would verify that it was written in a certain segment of time in a certain game number. There was a lot of pro tection in the game, yet it was the first man and second man who really pro tected the game.

On an eight hour shift, the writers had a ten minute break, a thirty minute break, and a ten minute break. You would split it up so you'd punch for an hour, take a ten minute break, come back, write for two hours, take a half hour break, come back, change paper for two hours, come back, and punch again. Just a routine. And it didn't mat

ter if someone called a lot of winners only once did a supervisor (a very excitable one) in Harolds Club come down and say, "Get that man off the microphone!" Of course, that was really just superstition.

We had goals for a certain number of keno games per hour, but some holidays, like George Washington's Birthday, we were so packed we didn't get fifteen games out in an eight hour period. That's how busy we were. But we'd have a terrific write! We would have a can of tickets, both sides filled three feet high, and then go on to almost fill a second can ten feet of keno tickets.

On a busy Memorial Day weekend, or any big holiday, we'd have about forty writers working on a shift. That wouldn't include runners or supervisors. Normally we'd go with two runners, but at a busy time there would be three or four. The crowds on the floor made it difficult for keno runners to move around. Between the writers and the runners and the supervisors, we're talking roughly fifty people on every shift.

When we could see that people were waiting for the game to start, then we would shut it and run a game, occasionally cutting off a straggler. But we never intentionally shut anybody out. Jessie wouldn't have it. Anybody wanted to play keno, they played keno! And boy, you wrote until you were blue in the face!

We would never intentionally shut anybody out, but, of course, the more games you got out . . . just like the twenty one game the more hands you get out, the more money you make. On an average day shift, we might get out forty to fifty games five to six games an hour, roughly. And we would be pushing, because you had to coordinate the other stations to come in. The seventh floor generally wasn't open until the swing shift, but the other two stations, you would coordinate them right in, give them enough help so that they finished just a little bit before station one, which was on the main floor. That was the perfect scenario to run a lot of games.

If the second floor didn't have many keno players, and the writers were sitting around waiting, the keno supervisor and the first man would pull writers down so there would only be two writers on those stations. Those two could handle anything that came along, and the bulk of the writers would be downstairs filling up the main counter.

In keno lingo, the "write" is the amount of money wagered by the players. It wasn't uncommon to have a write of over $10,000 on a shift, and at Harolds Club, the normal hold was probably 24 to 28 percent. We weren't told; that was strictly confidential, but knowing what percentage the individual tickets hold and we ran pretty true to course we had a good idea of our hold percentage. But that wasn't your business. Your business was to get the most write you could in the time you had to do it.

We used a squirrel cage, a metal cage, to hold the numbered balls. It was like the old bingo cage with ping pong balls, and the Beck Corporation never got away from that. (When Hughes came in, they changed to the rabbit ears.) We always used the brush, too. A lot of casinos went to the pen or the greasemark crayon, but we never did.

The first man watches the cage like a hawk, and the caller must show that his hands are empty when he transfers the balls. First, you spin the cage and make sure its neck is void of any ball. Then you roll the cage once, catch it, hit the release, get the ball in your right hand, transfer it to your left hand, showing your right hand is empty, place the ball on the rack with your left hand . . . then, com



In this photo from the 1940s, the "squirrel cage" containing numbered keno balls is at the left end of the counter, below a sign giving odds on the selection of from three to ten "horses" in any given "race."

ing back and showing your left hand empty, you spin the cage with your right. It takes some coordination, and it's a work of art when done by somebody who really knows how. People just *loved* to watch that cage go around and hear the noise.

As each number is called, that num ber is lit up on the keno board. The num bers stay on the board until you're just about ready to run the next game the lights go out when the balls are dropped. After we dropped the balls, took them out of the rack and put them in the cage, it would be no more than two or three minutes until we ran a new game. If the customer looked up and saw the lights were off on the board, he knew he'd better get his ticket in, because the new game was about to begin. It was a ploy to shut those lights off a little early and get the customers hustling back in the game so we could get more write.

Several procedures were followed to protect the game. One was the time stamp it was a must. Each writer had

his own "time machine." It was called a Simplex. You would shove your ticket in, and it would stamp the time on it. These clocks were checked at least three times a shift to make sure that every one was on time and that they were synchronized perfectly.

Then you had the paper check. Somebody would be checking the total stack of paper ten games in advance, fanning it through to make sure they were all the same game number. Then, when they passed out the paper, you'd have the first man and second man double check the bins as the guy picked them up to make sure he didn't leave a stack of tickets there.

Actually, simple honesty was the most important protection we had. Honest people were working for us they were just terrific, bang up, first class people.

On a regular day, there would be two men up on the desk. They'd be check ing, and the first man would be looking at the monitor and hustling the game along so that everybody would be co ordinated just right. A station might say, "Station two. We've got a load of tick ets." Man, you would get somebody off station one, send him directly upstairs, and help them out now! Get that station coordinated with all the rest of the sta tions and get it working. There was no lollygagging, no forgetting to turn the light on. It was go, go, go from the minute you hit that counter.

On the first floor, with the noise from the games and the thousands of people in the club, it was difficult for the first man to hear the payouts called in from the writers. He had help. Each writer had a microphone through which to call in tick ets through a speaker over the first man's desk. The first man would write down the serial numbers of the payoffs, which were listed in sequence in his staple book. He might have a staple book an inch and a half thick, and he'd fan through it, find that number, and call it back.

If the payout wasn't on a way ticket, he was fine. If it's a way ticket, he might ask another desk man to help him figure that way ticket out and go on and catch the single tickets and call them back. When he got back to that way ticket, and the guy across the desk had figured it out, then he'd call the win back to the writer.

The desk man had just one micro phone, from which he spoke to all the writers . . . and through the PA system. That's a good ploy, because you're al ways announcing winners, and if you're always announcing winners, you get more play. When we had a big winner, we made a big announcement, and we waited until we got a crowd to pay it off. It's a fun thing to pay off a $12,500 or a $25,000 ticket. We would pay it in $100 bills, and we'd pay it right across the counter. We'd have security on each side of the player, and the writer would pay it off. And a good writer'd stretch it out for a *good* two or three minutes. It's showmanship.

The most important part of a number one man's duties is security you got to make sure that all tickets are valid, that all tickets are in. The second part is coor dination. You got to get those games out if you're going to make any money. You can't slow down, you just got to go, go, go from the minute you get there until the minute you're off. Of course, there was competition between shifts over who could get the most games out. But it was friendly competition, and it was compe tition that was good for the company. The more you get out *without* sacrificing security, the better you are. That's the whole thing.

That was the most *efficiently* run game I've ever seen in my life. It was a pleasure to work there, because every thing was like clockwork. Everything was teamwork. Nobody tried to hold up any body else, or they paid for it they were shifted to another station and put in an undesirable window, a window that maybe would have a whole bunch of way tickets or something like that. Before I got there, they were given bonuses according to the write, but the State Gaming Commission stopped that I never received one of those. We did re ceive an annual bonus for doing a good job, but we never knew what the write was.

In 1970 Harolds Club was sold to Howard Hughes. It's my understanding that when Summa (Hughes's company) bought the club, Harold sold them ev erything. I believe Summa Corporation gave Jessie a token amount for her good will and equipment.

Jessie Beck's keno game continued when she bought the Riverside. There were three clubs she was looking at: one was Karl's Silver Club, one was Bill and Effie's, and one was the Riverside. Why she chose the Riverside, nobody knows, but she did, and we continued on.

Jessie was out of Harolds, but the shift supervisors, such as myself, were not im mediately replaced. Among us were Ray Scheid, Art Alouia, and Gene Mattson I was relief. And Augie Landucci, the keno manager, was not let go he was asked to take over the game, and he refused. He went with Jessie right off the bat. Then, about a week after Augie re fused the job, us shift supervisors were let go, but we were planning on going with Jessie anyway. Gene, Art, Jack Redmond, and I went with Jessie and helped her open the Riverside.

It was a friendly termination. The Hughes managers just said that we were Beck Corporation people and could not become Hughes oriented. Roy Christensen was sent up from Vegas to be the assistant manager of Harolds Club's keno. His first comment was, "Bill, while you're up here on this desk, you are God, and they'll do anything you want them to do." That was not the Beck Cor poration way, and I just couldn't oper ate that way.

Joe Jackson was the keno manager sent in by Hughes. I understand he later got rid of Roy Christensen, continued to run the game, and was a very success ful keno manager. He's the one that re ally started the computerized keno game. The average keno employees the writers, the runners were offered jobs, and a lot of the old crew stayed on. But most of the crew came down to the Riverside with us.

16

Jack Streeter

Jack Streeter was born in Ely, Nevada in 1921. When he was eight years old, his family moved to Sparks, Nevada. He graduated from Sparks High School and went on to the University of Nevada, where he was a member of the boxing and foot ball teams. While Jack was still in school, the United States became a combatant in World War II. After receiving his bachelor's degree, he oined the U. S. Army and went on to distinguish himself in combat in the European theater.

Following his discharge at the end of the war, Jack enrolled in the Hastings School of Law in San Francisco. He graduated with a law degree in 1948 and went into partnership with Gordon W. Rice, an established attorney in Reno, embarking on a ca reer that included service as the District attorney of Washoe County, 1950 1955. Shortly after his return to Reno, Jack and Harold Smith Sr. became golfing buddies, and eventually Jack found himself repre senting Harold in court. As he remembers it,

I first met Harold when I was in college. A rumor was circulating that the Bank Club was going to send hoodlums to disrupt Harolds Club turn over the tables and things of that nature so ten or twelve of us from the university went down to stand guard in the club, and I met Harold Smith Sr. for the first time. The rumor turned out to be unfounded.

In 1948, after I graduated from law school and returned to Reno to practice, Harold and I started playing golf together . . . we also played pinochle together. From then on I represented him occasion ally, although he had a lot of his legal work done by whoever was the attorney for Harolds Club at the time Mike Diskin, Jack Halley, and Ralph Wittenberg were among them.

I represented Harold when he and his third wife were divorcing; and when I was in the DA's office, he asked me to get an annulment for Harold Jr. Per haps most importantly, when Lyndon Johnson was president, and the IRS was trying to force casinos to report every win over $600, I represented Harolds Club at the hearings in Washington, DC. I ended up

on a three man committee representing all the casinos in the state of Nevada. The committee, comprised of Sam Boyd, Warren Nelson, and me, was successful in thwarting the IRS's efforts.

The year before I was elected district attorney, the then DA had filed criminal charges for attempted kidnapping of Pappy Smith's children. On the back of a truck, two fellows had built a body that looked like a load of lumber but was hol low on the inside. It had a door in back that couldn't be seen. They said they'd built this contraption so they could go out to Dog Valley and poach deer off sea son, put the deer in this hollowed out load, and bring them back to Reno.

Well, somebody told Pappy Smith that they had made this truck to kidnap his kids. They were arrested, and their case was pending when I took the DA's office. I looked into it. The defendants maintained that they had done this to poach deer, and there were no witnesses to the contrary the informant had dis appeared. I brought in a lie detector expert from the Berkeley PD and had him test the defendants, and he found that they were telling the truth. They had no connection with the Smith family and no intent to do any kidnapping, so I dis missed the case. I don't think Pappy ever forgave me for that.



Jack Streeter, mid-1970s.

I couldn't do much socially when I was DA, because I was working eighteen hours a day; however, my wife and I would occasionally go out to dinner with Harold and his wife Lois, and whenever Harold sponsored a dinner, we'd be in vited. We also went with them to the horse races down in California.

Harold was always a true gentleman wherever he went nice to ladies, al ways congenial with whoever he was with. He was a nice person to be around, and he always had a lot of life to him. I mean, he was a showman! He'd put on that baseball uniform and go through the club or ride his motorcycle through the club or ride his horse through the club. [laughter] He had a lot of life and color to him at all times. Once he even asked me to hunt grizzly bears with him.

I said, "Harold, I have no desire to go grizzly bear hunting."

He said, "I don't want you to really hunt. I just want you to back me up. If I miss the bear, I want somebody behind me who won't run, somebody who'll stay and shoot the bear."

I said, "OK, under those circum stances I agree to go." Well, he never made the arrangements. [laughter]

Sometime in 1969, Harold decided that he wanted to sell Harolds Club. He discussed it with me, and I told him he'd

have to get his brother Raymond's consent and the consent of Pappy's widow, Iola. (Raymond had 4 percent interest in the club, Iola had 48 percent, and Harold had 48 percent.) So he got their approval and kind of put it out on the market, mostly by word of mouth. In negotiating the sale, I was Harold's attorney, Bill Sanford was Iola's, and Paul Richards represented Raymond . . . but nobody seemed to be working on the sale but me.

Harolds Club no longer owned the property it occupied, so there were several leases involved that could potentially affect the sale. The main one was with the Webbel Corporation in New York they were the big owners. There was a sublease under them on a small portion of property that had to be settled; and there were little pieces of property on Douglas Alley and Commercial Row that were owned by different people but were kind of solidified and at the command of the New York people.

We went back east and met with the Webbel Corporation's three principals at the Waldorf Astoria. Harold got permission from them to give any buyer the same lease terms, the same rental, that Harolds Club was paying them. (While we were there, Harold would go out early every morning and clean up the street pick up bottles and stuff off the street and put them in the trash can. He just couldn't stand seeing trash on the street.)

We ended up with two active potential buyers: the Howard Hughes organization (Summa Corporation),and the Del Webb people. I met five or six times with each group over a period of a few months. Del Webb was in my office with his people one time, and he told them, "I've got to leave; I've got a plane to catch. Buy the place. Work with Streeter here and buy it!" But, being typical attorneys, they found fault with this and fault with that.

One fault they found was that Harolds Club's keno belonged to Jessie Beck. Jessie paid the Smiths a percentage of the take to operate the keno game there it wasn't near what it should have been, but the Becks were old family friends, and they had an oral agreement. So Jessie had no lease, and the Webb attorneys said, "Well, what are we going to do about this? How're you going to handle it?"

I said, "I'm not going to handle it. If you buy, you're going to handle it! Look, this place is a money making machine my advice would be to adequately and fairly compensate the Beck people for whatever they have in the way of equipment or anything else."

Harold and I had set the price on the club, and there was very little negotiating. As I recall, we agreed that $11.5 million would be it, and Iola agreed, and Raymond A. agreed, so we just stuck with it. The price was justified by the club's income, and we could show that the income would be even more when the buyer took back the keno and the poker games and so forth.

The Del Webb people, through their attorneys, kept dragging their feet, but it turned out that the Hughes people understood what was needed, and, before the Webb people could get it done, they came up and said, "Here's the check." It was $11.5 million, as I recall, and they weren't buying any real property, they were only buying a lease and a going business. It would have been worth *much* more than that if it was properly run, but when you get rid of four or five executives from the Smith family and put in six or seven from the Hughes organization, you haven't gained any ground.

Once we started negotiating with the Webb and Hughes people simulta

neously, the sale was done in a week. The Hughes people came up on a Monday with the check . . . Del Webb was due the next day, but it was too late. On the Sunday night before, I had called the attorney who represented the Hughes people in Las Vegas and said, "The Del Webb people are coming up here to close it Tuesday morning." He called me back at my home around 6:00 and said, "We'll be in your office at 10:00 Monday morning." And that's what happened. Harold Sr. would have gone for either deal, but the Howard Hughes people got there first and they wanted to pay cash.

The Hughes people reported to Robert Maheu, who was based in Las Vegas. When his lieutenants came into town and took over, I worked with them on the transition. I helped them buy four new Cadillacs (they wanted limousines), get a lease on a house at Lake Tahoe, and get rid of the Beck people and put all their assets back into the business.

Harolds Club got sold because Harold Sr. didn't want to run it anymore, and he felt that he didn't have any good back up to take over for him. Iola and Raymond felt that way too, so when he wanted out, they went along with him. Contrary to some hearsay, Harold had no cash shortage, and he had no gambling markers out. The only one that had any markers was Harold Jr., and Harold Sr. paid them off when he sold the club.

The year after the club was sold, Harold Jr. invested in a casino venture in Yugoslavia, and I was at the opening. He chartered a Yugoslav airliner to take about 160 people from Reno. We flew from San Francisco, landed in Canada and refueled, landed in Ireland and refueled, and then went on to Yugoslavia.

There were some gamblers among us, but there were also bankers, local entrepreneurs, and just people in general. Dr. Gerow and his wife were on the plane; Charlie Gepford of Sparks; Bobby Sullivan, the banker. John Heiser, the old mining engineer was on board. Those were the types of people who were aboard the airplane.

Harold Jr.'s casino was in a relatively new hotel, a nice hotel, and we all stayed there. The casino would open at something like 7:00 at night and close at midnight due to regulations of some kind, it wasn't open twenty four hours a day. While I was there, we went into the nearby town of Dubrovnik. I was walking down the street, and somebody called out, "Jack Streeter, Jack Streeter!"

It was Danny Skynowski from Tonopah. He was working for a casino in Dubrovnik, and he took us over to show it to us. It was a beautiful casino compared to Harold Jr.'s, and it had been there for some time. The place was run by a couple of guys who looked like mobsters. They said they were going to spend some time over at Harold Jr.'s casino trying to find ways to rip him off, and I imagine that they did rip him off, because he didn't stay open too long.

I had wanted Del Webb to purchase Harolds Club, because they were only going to pay 50 percent down, the rest to come later; and, for the benefit of Harold Sr., I'd rather he'd get half down and the other half over a period of two or three years, just so he didn't have all the money at once. I was afraid he'd gamble or give it all away, and I was right to be concerned. After he sold the club, he bought, I think, ten new Cadillacs and I don't know how many new boats. He just gave them away to ex employees or people he liked . . . he gave them all away.

Not long after the sale, I'm at lunch in the Holiday Hotel one day it's about 4:00 on a Friday afternoon, and we're

having a long business luncheon. I get a call: "Your client, Harold, is in Harrah's. He's really gassed, and he's got a lot of money in front of him."

I said, "OK, I'll come over there."

I get there, and Harold is at the bar. He's got $100 bills *all* over the place. They said, "What are you going to do with him?"

"Well, first of all, get me a bag, and we'll put all these $100 bills in it." So we put all the bills in the bag.

I said, "He's got a gold card. Get him a room here." And I gave Harold a hand ful of $100 bills: "Put these in your pocket."

They took him up to his room, and I left with the bag of money. When I got home that night, I counted about six hun dred $100 bills in this bag, and I had to wait until Monday morning to deposit it in the bank.

It wasn't just Harold's drinking and gambling that were problems. Harry Frost, the printer, got in some financial trouble, and Harold said, "My old friend Harry Frost is in trouble. Take care of him, Jack." And we did; with Harold's money, we helped him out. And, of course, Harry . . . help him out, and then he's right back doing what he was doing before, borrowing money from loan sharks at 30 percent interest, that kind of stuff. But we tried a couple of times to help Harry Frost out. That was typical of what Harold would do for people.

Some time went by, and we had a couple of cases at court: one was Harold's divorce from a woman to whom he had been briefly married, and in the other we sued one of his previous attor neys for mishandling a property in a sale of some kind. We were before Judge Grant Bowen, and, after hearing these two cases, he said, in Harold's presence, "Jack, I suggest you set up some kind of a trust for Mr. Smith so that he doesn't get involved in these types of things any more."

We went back to the office, and I told Harold, "We'll get ahold of the bank and set up a trust for you."

He said, "Jack, I don't want a bank to be my trustee. If you're not going to be my trustee, I'm not going to set up a trust." He talked me into becoming trustee, which I was for eight or ten years.

All Harold's assets, everything he owned, I got put in my name as trustee for him. He had a couple of pieces of real estate, some stocks and bonds, but not too many, and some cash and some gold coins and I had to dole out the money to him, and while we were doling out the money, he was support ing Harold Jr.'s children to the tune of, I think, $600 a month for groceries. We set up an account at Sewell's Market so that Janet, who had three or four kids, could get groceries to the tune of $600.

After we set up the trust, if we had Harold in an apartment, I'd pay his rent. If we had him in a home where some body was taking care of him, I'd pay that and give him so much walking around money. And depending on his habits during that period of time, and also if he was himself and had been sober for five or six months and he wanted to do some thing, I'd give him the money to go do it take a trip or buy something or what ever. But if he wasn't himself . . . well, I wouldn't give him the money.

After I became trustee, I put the casi nos on notice not to extend Harold any credit, because it wouldn't be paid. Some of the casinos continued to extend him credit anyway, because they knew he had money. Matter of fact, he had on deposit at the Ponderosa quite a few gold coins that he had put up for credit. I knew Larry Tripp, the owner, very well, and I said, "Larry, how much does he owe you?"

He said, "Fifty five thousand."

I said, "How many $20 gold pieces do you have?" He told me they were worth about $150,000.

I said, "Larry, send the coins over, and I'll give you a check." He carried them himself . . . all the way over from the Pon derosa. My office was across the street from the courthouse on the second floor of what was then the Valley Bank build ing. I look out the window, and there's Larry Tripp carrying a big box that must have weighed fifty to seventy five pounds and was full of gold coins. I gave him a check, and Harold Sr. got the gold coins back. I put them in a safety deposit box, and I would dole them out to him as he needed them.

Among his jewelry holdings, Harold originally had two star rubies: one was about five carats, and the other one about ten or twelve carats. Both were beautiful rings, and after I set up the trust, he was always after me to take the rings out whenever he felt like wearing one and enjoying it. I always hesitated to give them to him, but one day I finally said OK.

Harold said, "Let me have the big one."

I said, "No, I'm going to give you the small one." The next day I learned that Sam Ginsburg, the jeweler, had bought it, and the money was gone over the gaming table. [laughter] (When Harold passed away, we still had a diamond and the big star ruby, and I think it was valued at around $45,000.)

Harold owned a huge Rolls Royce with a special body made by a coachbuilder in Paris. There's only three of them it was a real collectors item. He also had a chauffeur's outfit, complete with cap and everything, and I asked him, "Why did you get that outfit?"

He said, "Look, if I'm driving through Oakland or anyplace like that, I want them to think I'm the chauffeur and not the owner of this car." [laughter] In any event, he traded that in for a brand new Rolls Royce, which I wish he'd never done, because he had a collector's item. Then he crashed the new one into something, and the front grill was crushed. We imported a new one from England for something like $2,000. I said, "We have to get rid of this car. It's just too expensive to maintain." We got rid of the Rolls, and I got him a Chevy.

Those were the kinds of things we had to do basically on a monthly basis. He'd fall off the deep end every once in awhile, and Sister Seraphine would call me from St. Mary's and say, "Your protégé is up here, and he's suffering from malnutrition." [laughter]

I'd tell her, "Just dry him out, and we'll pay the bills." So she would. That went on for about eight years, and I threat ened from time to time just to assign his trust to the bank. But I couldn't do it, be cause of Harold's nature. He'd been so good to everybody all of his life that I just said, "Well, I'll continue to sweat it out."

When he passed away, Harold's es tate was valued at approximately $600,000. If I could have pinpointed the day he would die, I would have rationed out his money accordingly, and he would have been able to spend it all.

17

Darl Voss

Darl Voss was born in Hemingford, Nebraska in 1925. While he was still very young, his family moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he grew up. Upon graduation from high school in 1943, Darl oined the U. S. Navy and was trained as an electrician. He was assigned to the Fallon Naval Air Station, where he served for the duration of World War II.

On most weekends, the only way Darl could get off base was to volunteer for temporary duty on Shore Patrol, which he frequently did. Sailors on Shore Patrol worked evenings and had the days for themselves. Their responsibilities included walking the downtown streets of Reno, checking its bars and casinos to see that Navy men and women were on their good be havior. Duty required frequent visits to Harolds Club, where Darl made the acquaintance of several man agers and dealers, as well as the general manager, Pappy Smith. As he remembers it,

You meet a lot of people as you walk through the casinos matter of fact, I met my wife that way. I was working with an MP; walking home when our watch was over, we came to a cab stand, and a lady was standing there. The MP goes over to talk to her, and after a few minutes, he calls me over and says, "Darl, I want you to meet someone. This is my girlfriend, Marj."

It was cold, and it was late. I was getting annoyed, and I said, "Let's get the hell out of here. We don't need to talk to her."

Marj was a twenty one dealer at Harolds Club, and I had probably seen her before; but you saw so many pretty girls at that time and looked at all of them and were not paying attention to any *one*. After we met, I started paying attention to Marj. Six weeks later, we were married.

Even when I was still in the navy, just walking through casinos, you could see the difference in atti tude in the clubs and the way they treated people and the way the people who were working there felt. Harolds Club felt like a big family, even back then, and the people who worked there were much hap pier and treated the customers much nicer than most



Marj and Darl Voss.

of the other casinos. At the time, there were only the Palace Club, the Golden . . . there were a couple more on Virginia Street, and Pick Hobson had one. But there were only about four or five casinos of any size. Harolds Club was not too large at that time, either. It was just a little L shaped place. I think there were two crap tables, and the rest of them were twenty one games, and one wheel.

Going into Harolds Club while I was on Shore Patrol, I met Jim Hunter, who was kind of Pappy Smith's executive of ficer he wasn't the general manage, but he was managing the club on a day to day basis. When I was discharged from the navy in 1946, Jim Hunter asked me if I wanted to come to work for Harolds Club. I said, "Sure." So, without any inter view or anything else, because he had known me through my being in there with the Shore Patrol, Jim put me directly to work.

I started as a check racker on a rou lette wheel. They have two people on a wheel, usually one is called the dealer, and the other is called the check racker. My job was to assist the dealer in picking up chips as they came off the table. I was also supposed to keep an eye on the game to see that nobody did any thing they weren't supposed to do while the dealer was busy doing something else. So, I learned to deal roulette first. That was quite a game!

In those days, Harolds Club didn't hire any experienced help they trained their own dealers all the way through. You

learned on the game; and, after learning a little bit about the wheel, enough so I could get by if I had to, they started to teach me craps . . . or dice. I had some excellent teachers. I had a lady named Tish Hall, who was an extremely good teacher; and later on, I had a man named Bob Dodson, and he was an excellent dealer.

Harolds Club had what they called a dime table, which was a real challenge to anyone trying to learn how to deal the dice game. On that table, the cheapest in the club, we had some customers who were real characters. One of them was Smokey Anderson, and anybody who learned to deal dice at Harolds Club during that period of time was broken in by Smokey Anderson. He'd take advantage of you and the game, but he would help you, too if somebody else was trying to cheat you too badly, he would let you know! [laughter] I'm sure those characters would frequently win enough from us on the dime table to pay for their meals.

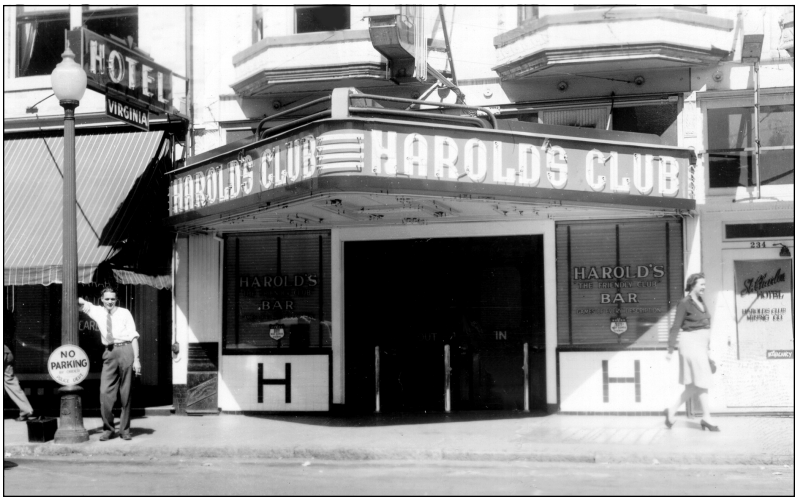
They could do things to us, because we were very, very green. We didn't know what we were supposed to do. I remember the first time they handed me a craps stick to retrieve the dice they threw the dice down, and it didn't mean anything to me, so I brought them back in; and that was when my education started! You had to call what number came up on the dice, so that your partner would know what was going on, and so that the customers would know what was going on. I had no idea what you had to do, so I just stood there like a big dope. But my education started, because they all started getting on me, and you learned quite readily when the *customers* started telling you how to deal the game.

During the day, Harolds had a place where they put in a horse book the Beck Corporation operated it. In the evening, Harolds Club would take down the things needed to run horse book, like the boards where they listed the names of the horses; they'd take those down and move in about six more twenty one tables. So then, at night, after all the tracks had closed, they would open the other games. They were quite a bit larger at night than they were in the daytime.

Harolds Club fronted on Virginia Street. Its L shape went to Lincoln Alley on the back and Douglas Alley on the north side. The club was really quite small, but they had a bar it wasn't much of a bar, but they felt they had to have one, because when people are gambling they like to drink. Mr. Smith really didn't care much for bars, but he was smart enough to realize that running a gambling house, you had to have a place for people to get a drink.

When I say Mr. Smith, I'm talking about Raymond I., who was the general manager. He was not one of the owners. Harold and Raymond A. were the owners at that time, but Raymond I. was their dad, and he was *really* the boss. Most people called him Pappy, and some called him Pappy to his face, but I always tried to show respect I called him Raymond I. (Maybe I called him Pappy when I was talking to my wife or somebody, but I just felt that he had more respect coming than that.)

Raymond I. was the idea man for the whole place, and he came up with some pretty fancy ideas on occasion. Some were good, and some were *really* bad: Like, if you came in with a driver's license, you'd get so many free chips for however many miles you came. You'd be surprised how many people came from



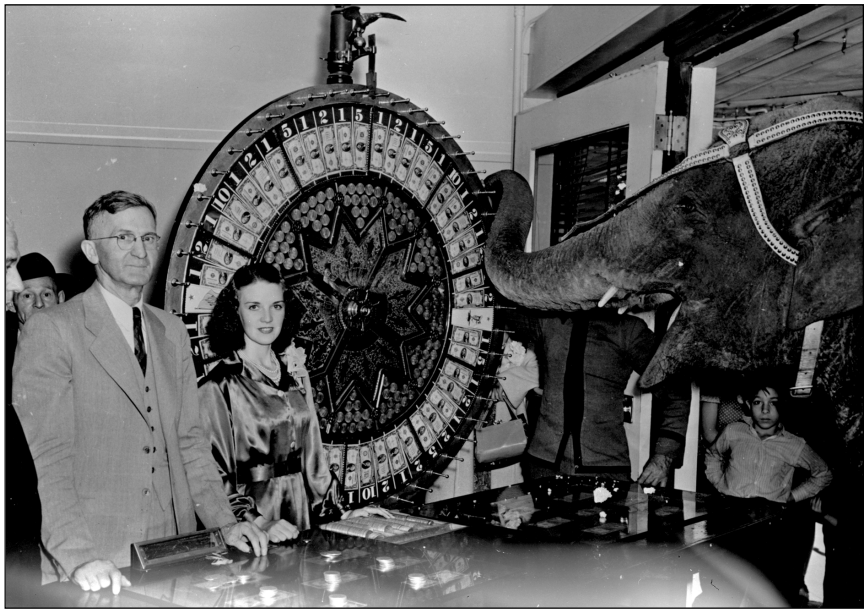
"The club was really quite small" Harolds Club, c. 1943.

Florida! They all had a Florida driver's li cense . . . that didn't last very long.

Mr. Smith was the one who started doubling the bets on twenty one and crap tables. (I guess he was the only one who ever did it.) People would be play ing, and Mr. Smith would walk up to the dealers and say, "Just hold it there for a minute." Then he'd say, "I'm Raymond I. Smith. Harolds Club would like to double your bet. Anything you have bet at this time, if you win, the dealer is going to pay you two for one." That was re ally quite a thing; people talked about that forever. And people began taking advantage of it, so he'd bring a little girl along with him, and she'd watch to see if anybody increased their bet or did any thing like that. He was a pretty sharp man.

Occasionally, if the cus tomers lost that doubled bet, Mr. Smith would say, "Well, bet again," and he'd take the cards from the dealer. He'd deal, and he'd hit his hand until he'd go broke, so he'd make sure that the customers won. He called that "a poor bastard" hand. Since they'd lost the first hand, he'd say, "Well, we'll pay the poor bastards two for one this time for sure!" Same way on the crap table. On the slot ma chines, Mr. Smith would go around with this lady that had some coins, and if you were playing nickels, he'd give you a roll of nickels; if you were playing dimes, he'd give you a roll of dimes; quarters, quar ters, and so forth.

When I first started, they only had six or seven slot machines, and they were



"Raymond I. (left) came up with some pretty fancy ideas Some were good, and some were really bad."

nickels and dimes, because they were there just for the women. Raymond I. was instrumental in putting in what they call "loose" slot machines. He was very smart he said, "If we can keep the women happy playing slot machines, they won't worry how much their hus bands are losing on a dice table or a twenty one table." So, he had the slot mechanic rig up the slot machines to be so liberal that they almost lost money on them, just to keep the women happy. It worked very well, and they found that they even made a little money on those slot machines. When they eventually got a whole bunch of machines, they ran them all loose, because they figured the volume would take care of everything. It did.

Many of our customers at that time were couples husbands and wives but women didn't play as much as the men. Some did, but most were slot ma chine players. Many men came in by themselves, and we had more men than women, but we had a larger share of women customers than the other casi nos.



Slot mechanic John Bettencourt adjusts a machine.

Mr. Smith and Harold both tried to bring women into the club by having women dealers, not only on the twenty one games, but also on the dice tables. At one point, people thought women wouldn't come in because they'd be afraid that their man would play with a woman dealer, and there'd be some thing going on. But that was not the case, because the women dealers were such nice ladies that there could be no jeal ousy between a wife and a dealer.

Raymond I. went on doubling bets and handing out rolls of coins to slot play ers until 1965 or 1966, and then The state gaming commission may have had something to say about doubling the bets, because it was taking some rev enue away from the state, or something. But he did it for as long as he legally could, and that's one of the things that really made the customers happy.

Raymond I. was also a great adver tising man. When you were driving across the country, most anyplace you went, you'd see a sign that said, "Harolds Club 10 miles," or "Harolds Club 150 miles," or "Harolds Club 620 miles." Dur ing World War II, they even had signs on the islands over in the Pacific that said, "Harolds Club" however many miles it was. People really loved that. They'd read these signs and come into Harolds Club and say, "I saw your sign at such and such." It was quite a come on.

One time this customer came in, and he looked around it was a real small place and he said to Skip Vinson, one of our floor men, "You mean to tell me this is what I came to see, after all those signs all over the place?"

Skip said, "Well, it got the job done. You're here, aren't you?"

All Mr. Smith wanted to do was get you here. He used to say, "If we get you here and we don't keep you, it's our fault. Our goal is to get you into the club, and once you are here, it's up to us to treat you right and see that you stay." If any one person made Harolds Club a suc cess, it was Raymond I. Smith.

During the war, few men were avail able to work in the casinos. That's one reason Harolds Club went to women dealers and women supervisors; but it couldn't have been the only one there were no female dealers or supervisors in any of the other clubs. However, there were a *lot* of people from Idaho and Montana working in the casinos. I don't know what the deal was up there, but they came down and went to work in Reno.

When I first went to work at Harolds Club, there were still a num ber of female supervi sors, but as men came back from military ser vice, they began re placing the women. At least two female supervisors stayed on a couple of Ruths. Ruth Lindeman we called "Lindy" or "Big Ruth", and Ruth Fuller we called "Little Ruth." Big Ruth was a pretty, buxom gal, full bodied and vivacious and outgoing. Little Ruth was a teeny little thing, but she was very intelligent and worked hard. They were both good bosses, and both eventually got married and quit.

We had another nice lady floor per son her name was Jessie Howard at the time, and then it became Jessie Beck when she married Fred Beck. When I started at Harolds Club, the Beck Corpo ration owned the club's keno game. They also had the poker games, and they ran the horse book. The Beck Corpora tion kept the keno game until Harolds Club was sold to Howard Hughes. Harolds Club profited from their arrangement . . . but whether it was a lease of the space, or a percentage of the take, or what, I don't know.

Certain local customers were regu lars. When they came into the club, you knew what time of day it was and what day of the week. We had a great many out of towner regulars too, and we got to be friends with lots of them. You'd



"Big Ruth" Lindeman, top center, has pride of place over a bevy of Harolds Club dealers gracing the club's float in the 1947 Reno Rodeo parade. "Little Ruth" Fuller stands left of "Big Ruth's" cocked elbow; Raymond A. Smith's wife, Olga, is second from right in the seated row.



Jessie Howard in the late 1940s, before her marriage to Fred Beck.

know the wife and the husband, know about their family. One craps dealer, Lou Cardella, was super he'd say to these guys, "Oh, today's your son's birthday." He'd even give them presents. Lou made more money in tokes than anybody else, because people loved him. But there wasn't a lot of money made in tokes in the early days. Sometimes you'd get enough to buy lunch and maybe some thing else, but there wasn't the great money that everybody thought there was at that time. A dollar just went fur ther.

Everything was done in silver dollars. If anybody brought a dollar bill to the table, you'd look at him like, "Where are you from?" All the games had silver on them we dealt mostly with silver dollars.

We had some $5 chips and $20 chips and $100 chips, but we didn't use them very much, because most of our business was small. We even had a quarter twenty one table. Most of us broke in on twenty one on the quarter table, just like on dice on the dime table. We had a lot of half dollar tables, and if you got to deal on a dollar table, you thought you were really something. We did have two $5 tables they were $5 minimum and $500 maximum tables. At that time, I think that was the biggest limit there was any place in the state.

Harolds Club's big game dealers were highly trusted by management for their honesty. They had to be, because we had very few floor personnel. Most clubs had what they called pits. We couldn't have pits, because the contour of the club was not conducive. The tables ran down a hallway, or down a straight line and across another straight line, so it was difficult to have pits. There fore, no pit bosses. But we had what they called "call buttons" on the floor be neath the tables, and if a dealer had a problem and needed a boss (we called them "floor men"), he or she would step on the button, and a bell would ring.

We had a floor man named Clark Brown, who made out the dealers' schedule. He had me scheduled on the high limit crap table, and I said, "Clark, you better get another dealer for this in the next week or so, because I'm going to quit. I'm going to work at the Bank Club."

He thought it was a big joke, but I kept telling him, because I wanted to let him know in advance. One morning, I came in and said, "Well, I'm going to go work at the Bank Club, Clark. I'm sorry. I told you I would." I went over to the Bank Club and got checked in over there.

The fellow says, "Take the first break."

My wife was still working at Harolds Club. So I went back to see what time she was going to get a break, and when

I walked in the back door, one of the floor men, Don McDonnel, said, "Darl, Raymond I. wants to see you up in his office."

I said, "I don't think he has anything to say to me."

He said, "I think he does."

I went over to see him in his office across the alley, and I walked in with my Bank Club tie on. He says, "Take that goddamned tie off. You don't work there. You work here!"

"What do you mean?"

"We had a meeting this morning."

The thing was, I had left Harolds Club making $15 a day. I went to the Bank Club to make $17.50 a day. Mr. Smith had a meeting that morning and said, "I just heard that one of our best dealers quit because he'd make more money some place else." He says, "We're all getting a raise." So, all the dealers got $20 a day. That was pretty good.

I went back to the fellow who I had checked in with at the Bank Club, and he says, "You really should work at Harolds Club anyway, Darl. You're too nice a guy to work at the Bank Club." [laughter]

I knew all the games and had dealt all of them before I became a floor man ager, or floor man. I was on the high limit crap game for a long time, and then there was a vacancy. I think Raymond I. had something to do with my promotion. Somewhere along the line, he said, "I've got an idea. What if the club taught all its employees about Dale Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*?"

I said, "Sounds like a good idea, Mr. Smith. Who are you going to get to teach the class?"

He said, "It's going to be you."

"Christ!"

Mr. Smith gave everybody a copy of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. They read it; then, on the club's time, we all met upstairs and discussed that book, went over it quite thoroughly. Mr. Smith was that set on trying to get Harolds Club people to be nice to customers! Shortly after that, I went on the floor.

As a dealer, I had been making $20 a shift. When I went on the floor, I didn't make much more, and there were no tokes; but if you're going to stay in the gaming business, you have to learn to do everything. The experience was quite valuable, and, through that, I got some other good jobs later on in my life. It was well worth it, I think.

In the 1950s, the Sahati brothers gave us a lot of action. They were high stakes players, and they were characters with two very different personalities. Nick was an ornery sort, and he would cuss out everybody who didn't do well for him on the dice table, especially the other shooters. If a customer didn't shoot a hand that was good for Nick, he'd get really upset.

One time Nick cussed out a guy in uniform (an airman, I think), and the guy didn't say anything, just stepped up and whacked him a good one . . . knocked him down and walked off. Everybody had wanted to do it, but nobody had guts enough, because Nick spent a lot of money in the club. It was a good thing that a guy from outside the club did it. Somebody said, "I want to buy you lunch." [laughter]

Ed Sahati was the other way around. He was the happy go lucky, big, boister ous type, and he spent more money than Nick but there's also some stories about Ed and his bodyguard, Woody. Ed liked to play on a dice table on the second floor, where he'd try to . . . I won't say



Darl Voss (left) leading an employee seminar on *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

cheat, but he'd slide the dice to hold certain numbers, and if you knocked them down, he got very upset. He was always trying to get an edge. Woody would stand at the head of the escala tor, and if a boss or anybody with any authority came up, he'd let Ed know about it, and Ed would simmer down.

The whole Sahati family was gam blers. They had a casino at Lake Tahoe called Sahati's Stateline Country Club. It was pretty well known. They treated their customers differently at the lake way differently than we did in Reno. They fig ured they had them only for a few months, and they probably wouldn't get them back, so they weren't too con cerned about whether they made long term customers out of them or not.

At one time, Mr. Smith was interested in buying Harvey's Wagon Wheel up at the lake. This goes back a long time, when Harvey's was still a small casino. Mr. Smith sent my wife and me up to spend a week there to see what we thought about it. It had a lot of potential. We came back, and I told him I thought it would be a good place to buy.

He said, "Well, I *have* been thinking about it. But we al ready have enough problems operating one casino with Harold; and if we had another one up at the lake that I couldn't keep track of"

Harold Sr. loved to gamble he thought he was the best in the world. He gambled sober and while drinking, but if he got a little bit drunk, he didn't have as good control as he should have. Ac tually, he just should not have gambled at all, but being in the business, I guess he wanted to show people how good he was. When he wrote his book, *I Want to Quit Winners*, he sort of gave people a clue that he wasn't as good as he thought.

Harold was quite a character, but he did some really good things for Harolds Club. He brought in good entertainers and brought famous classical recording artists to Reno for concerts at Manogue High School. Of course, he and Mr. Smith, and Harolds Club in general, did many things to benefit the community and the state. Perhaps the most famous were the Harolds Club scholarships, given annually

to a student in each county to attend the University of Nevada.

At one time, the Smith family wanted to build a new football stadium for the university. In return, all they wanted was a little plaque up in the corner saying, "Donated by Harolds Club," but the university refused, because it was gambling money, and they didn't want to be tainted. There were a lot of narrow minded people on campus back then. I'm sure that if anybody offered to build them anything now, they'd welcome it with open arms.

When I started at Harolds Club, it was just a small L shaped building, but it soon began to expand. Next door was Harrah's Bingo Parlor, and there was a hamburger shop on the corner of Douglas Alley Mr. Smith was able to get that whole area occupied by those businesses.

I told him, "I don't think we'll ever get that filled."

He says, "Oh, yes. We'll get it filled in nothing flat." So we opened it, and sure enough, we just kept getting more and more customers and more and more people to work there. After that, Mr. Smith decided we'd better build a second floor, and I don't think there was any other place in gaming that had a second floor at that time. To provide access to it, they put in the first escalator in the state of Nevada.

The logo of Harolds Club was a covered wagon, so they said, "We'll call it the Covered Wagon Room." Behind all the table games in the room, they put mirrors with pictures of scenes from early Nevada, and they put in several twenty one games and two crap tables and slot machines and a cashier's cage. Shortly after that, they put in what they called the Silver Dollar Bar, which was a bar with silver dollars inlaid in plastic. At one point they had what they called the Whiskey Waterfall in the Silver Dollar Bar, but they had to take that out, because the fumes were getting to the bartenders and some of the customers. They were actually running whiskey over the falls! [laughter]

After the Covered Wagon Room, they put another room over the top of the expansion, which they called the Roaring Camp Room. It was called the Roaring Camp Room because they displayed there an extensive gun collection that they had purchased from the owner of the Roaring Camp on Lake Street. At one time they had a big fireplace in there with seats all around it. We had three or four games in there, but it was primarily a slot machine room and gun display room. At one point they kept the Roaring Camp Room closed to gaming in the morning just so that kids could come up and see all the guns and things. Then they'd reopen the gaming at two o'clock in the afternoon and run it until 2:00 in the morning.

Speaking of children, I think Harolds Club was instrumental in starting the first child care program for children of parents who were gaming. We had a recreation room across the alley with a movie theater where they showed children's movies. You had to log your children in with the person there at the desk, and log them out when you took them. And if anyone was negligent and didn't get their child in a reasonable length of time, we'd have a security officer go over and find them. They'd page them and get them out of the casino and tell them to go feed their children or do something with them. We didn't want any of the children to be neglected, and we had very few problems in that regard. Our



"Oh, yes. We'll get it filled in nothing flat." June 21, 1944, and the club is packed.

child care facility was a nice gimmick that gave the club a chance to get a few more bucks from the customer.

We also had what we called a recre ation room where employees went on their breaks. They could go over and sit down and read or play chess or have coffee or whatever they wanted to do. The movie theatre was back behind that. We had an authorized movie operator to show the movies, and they were al ways, naturally, children's movies, so it was very well done.

In later years, the Smiths put a restau rant on the third floor, running an esca lator up to it from the second. You could also reach it by the elevator in the front of the building. Mr. Smith was not that happy about putting in the restaurant, because he didn't want to go into com petition with nearby restaurant owners, but there were so many other casinos going with restaurants that he felt he al most had to.

One of the things Mr. Smith started was what became known as two for ones. A customer would go up to the res taurant and have a meal, and when he paid his bill, he'd get a two for one cou pon. With that coupon on the games downstairs, he'd get paid two for one on a dollar bet if he won. That made quite

a hit with the customers. A lot of local people came in just for that.

In 1955 Harolds Club expanded to seven floors. On the seventh floor, we had high limit games a roulette wheel, a twenty one game, and a high limit crap game. There was also a little miniature train that would run around the bar and take drinks to the customers. That didn't work too well, so it didn't last long.

From the beginning, the club's bosses were Harold and Raymond I. Having two bosses caused a problem on the seventh floor. There were drapes on the windows up there, and Harold wanted them closed so the customers couldn't look out and see that it was daytime. Raymond I. wanted them open so people could see the view. When you have two different factions The poor floor man up there had a fine time trying to keep track of which Smith was in the club. It was one of those situations where whatever you did was wrong.



The seven floor "expansion" towers over the main club, c. 1960. Windows at top right led to power struggle.

In truth, Mr. Smith, Raymond I., was the general manager, and he was pretty much the boss of the thing, except when Harold Sr., who was president, would make his presence known. One night I was working graveyard shift, and Raymond I. called. A customer had complained to him that he'd lost his money because he'd gotten drunk on free drinks. Mr. Smith said, "There will be no more free drinks provided in Harolds Club as long as I'm general manager."

I said, "Mr. Smith, are you sure this is what you want to do?"

"Yes," he said. "That's an order!"

So, I got ahold of the bar manager, floor men, cocktail waitresses, and told them, "No free drinks."

This was after midnight. In about ten minutes, I got a call from Harold Smith Sr. He says, "I know you just got a call from my dad to tell you no more free drinks. But I am president of this corporation," he says. "We're going back to the free drink policy."

So, I have to go around and get hold of the bar manager, bartenders, cocktail waitresses, and floor men, and say, "We're back to the original."

Mr. Smith called one more time, and I said, "I don't care which way we go, but would you please, the two of you, get together and decide on which way you're going, because this is keeping everybody upset."

They evidently got together, and we stayed with the policy of free drinks at Harolds Club. That was the point where I learned that as a manager, you better put down the date and time you get a call from any of the bosses, because you better have a reason why you did what you did at the time you did it.

Raymond I.'s wife, Iola, was also very active in what went on in the casino behind the scenes. I used to get calls from her when I was on the floor, asking me

questions that were pertinent to what was going on at the time. She often knew the answer before I told her, but she wanted to check and make sure that everybody was telling her the truth. She was a very sharp lady, and she helped Raymond I. with a lot of the decisions that he made a very intelligent lady.

When Harold Jr. turned twenty one, he started working with us on the floor to learn how to become a floor manager. He thought he was going to come in and change the world, you know. Once a lady dealer, a friend of Raymond I.'s, was giving a little help to a customer letting the customer know whether to hit or to stand. I called Junior. I said, "Now, I've talked to your grandfather about this several times, and I fired the dealer a couple of times, but she's always hired back. Your grandfather says she needs the money."

Harold says, "I'll take care of that."

I says, "Fine."

So we went up in the catwalk, and Harold Jr. saw for himself. He called his granddad, but his granddad didn't do a thing about it.

I said, "Now, you see one of the things that we're up against when we see something like this, we really can't do anything about it. Other times, you're supposed to do something about it, but it depends on who it is."

Junior tried to assert himself, but he was always under the rule of his grand father. Raymond I. still ruled the roost, and if Junior did something he didn't think was quite right, he let him know and straight ened him out; but Junior and his dad and granddad loved to play bridge together, so they were compatible in that way.

Some employees were more prone to listen to one Smith than the other . . . not that you didn't have to listen to all of them. But Harold had a certain group of people that he would cater to a little bit more than others. And Raymond I. prob ably had the same, but it was difficult to tell, except in a couple of instances. Dan Orlich was very much Harold's boy, be cause Dan was an excellent trap shooter, and Harold was very interested in that kind of thing. So with Dan, if any thing would come up, Harold would make sure that Dan got the best of it.

Dan ended up being what they called a shift manager. A shift manager was in charge of everything on the shift, except the bars. The casino people had no control over the bars, because they belonged to the Raymond I. Smith Cor poration. They were a separate corpo ration.

We had three shifts: day shift, swing shift, and graveyard shift. So we had three shift managers, and Dan was one of the managers. We rotated the man agers every year, so that nobody was stuck on one shift forever.

Jim Hunter was what I would call as sistant general manager. He was under the Smiths, but he was over the shift man agers and all the other personnel, and he was in charge of both slots and games. Jim was very influential what ever he said was pretty much the way it was going to be. He was always there, and if we had a problem, or we got in a position where we had to make a judg ment call that we were concerned about, we'd always let him know and he would intercede or help. As long as you let him know what was going on, there was no problem.

Out on the old Pyramid Highway, Harolds owned a gun club where they held skeet shoots and trap shoots. All the top shooters came out, because of our big purses. We had several shoots a year,

and they'd open pit games out there at the time. I worked out there as a dealer.

One time a dice customer was winning, and he wanted to continue to play after everything else was closed. Jim Hunter was there, and Glenn Botorff and I were dealing on the crap table. The customer gambled and gambled. Snapper was the bartender he made coffee all night long until we ran out of cups. It was about 7:00 in the morning before the guy finally quit, and it was one of the largest differences in a crap game that I'd ever dealt the guy was ahead of us about $250,000, and then he ended up losing that back and going into his pocket for a bunch of money.

Jim Hunter said to Glenn and me, "You guys want to stay home tomorrow?"

We said, "No, we'll come back."

When we got our paychecks, I thought, "Well, boy! I'm going to have a pretty good paycheck, because I got a lot of overtime." But the day we came back was a new day, so we came back to regular hours. I just raised hell with poor old Eddie Thomas up in payroll. I said, "You mean to tell me there's no overtime?"

He says, "Darl, that's the law."

"Well, law be damned," I said, "we worked sixteen hours straight!"

He said, "No, I can't do it."

So we were not paid overtime for the extra eight hours, just straight time.

We had a lot of good dealers out there. They tried to pick dealers that were good to customers and knew the game well, so there'd be no problems with mistakes, and nobody would offend anybody. People liked to work out there, because we made pretty good tokes, and it was sort of a prestige thing to work at the gun club.

Harolds club had a lot of promotional and advertising activities. Anytime we'd go on a trip, Harold would ask us to take a case of matches and a case of ash trays, or however many we could handle, and give them out at every stop that we made and any place that we thought might be advantageous to the club.

Another item we gave out was fountain pens, and we also had a little drink token that said, "Have a drink on me." It showed a picture of Mr. Smith. At one point, we even had our own liquor made up. We had Harolds Club bourbon, Harolds Club vodka, Harolds Club scotch I don't know how long that lasted.

One of Harold's biggest promotions, as far as he was concerned, was his book. He wrote *I Want to Quit Winners,* and for hours and hours he'd sit out some place and autograph books for people as they came by. He gave away many, many of those books, way more than he sold. Another thing was our calendars. On graveyard shift, when it wasn't busy, we'd have employees go over to the office and stuff calendars into envelopes and address them. We gave away thousands of calendars every year.

Also, some place along the line, they had an advertising balloon, or what they called a dirigible, tethered on the roof of the seventh floor. If somebody was misbehaving or screwed something up, they got a chance to go up on the roof and watch the balloon and make sure that the tether didn't get fouled. We used to say, "Well, who's going to watch the balloon today?"

I became a shift manager around 1955. The top wage then was $80 a shift, and we got free meals, and the Smiths gave us all tailored suits. Shift managers



"Who's going to watch the balloon today?"

wore black suits, and assistant shift man agers wore grey. Steve Tarn, a tailor in town that was a good customer, made the suits for all the bosses.

At Harolds Club a shift manager's re sponsibilities ran the gamut, from mak ing sure that the lights were turned off on time in the morning, so that they weren't wasting electricity, all the way to okaying and watching any high limit games. We were general managers per se for the whole time we were on shift, unless one of the Smiths was there. But our responsibilities were a little different from in other clubs, because the keno was not ours, the bars were actually un der Mr. Smith's direct control, and we weren't that involved in the slot depart ment unless there was some kind of a problem.

The slot managers I remember from the 1940s through the 1960s were Homer Pope, Harold Smithson, and Heck Bristol. Each of them had what they called a "key man" under them, who was respon sible for keeping the machines on his shift in running order, making sure that there weren't any malfunctions. And we had what they called "change aprons," who would carry around a large amount of

change in an apron, so that customers wouldn't have to leave their machines to get coins from the cashier.

A big slot machine repair shop occupied the entire fifth floor of the new building, the one that had seven stories. Harolds Club employees did all their own repairs, made their own parts, and there were people in there twenty four hours a day. Every month or so, they did a complete check on all the machines, and they kept them in really good shape, so the customers wouldn't be unhappy with a breakdown.

On the dollar slot machines, we had a policy that if a player went to lunch, she could cap her machine, which prevented anyone from playing it for thirty minutes or so. Some of these other women would watch and say, "Well, they've been gone thirty one minutes. I want to play that machine."

One woman caused me to get an unlisted phone number, because she'd call me at home when she was having a problem with some other lady. Finally my wife said, "That's it. I don't mind you having problems with them down at work, but I don't think we have to have them at home."

Some of them were really vicious They didn't want to leave a machine, because they'd put so much money in it already, but someone else was waiting to get that machine. They were just at each other all the time! We had certain women, who, I think, would cap a machine on purpose, just to keep another woman waiting.

Our credit manager, Edith Grisham, was probably the best in the country at what she did. I always let her make any decision on credit, because I was not capable of doing all the things she had to do to find a person's credit. She was fantastic. The police used come in and work with her on forgeries and that kind of thing.

We got the results of the table games every day, and we kept track of each table's win and each dealer's. Some dealers would consistently win more than others. There's no such thing as luck . . . but some dealers *were* luckier than others, actually. Some had a very poor average. (To get one's average, we would divide how much money she had won for the club by how many shifts she had worked.) If one had a good average, we tried to put her on one of the better, higher minimum tables, so that we'd win more money with her. We used the results a lot in the scheduling of the games.

If a dealer had been winning, had been lucky, had been making a lot of money, and then we noticed a gradual deterioration in her winnings, we would keep a real close eye on her. In the catwalk, several security people were situated behind one way mirrors; and you could get right over a table game and read the cards and watch the dealer's hands and the dealer's expression and everything to see if there was any indication that she was giving a customer a little bit of an edge, like tipping off her hole card or the next card off the deck. We'd watch her closely if there was a decided drop in her average, because we felt that it should remain pretty much the same most dealers kept about the same average all the way along.

Also, you'd look to see if the same customer was playing there all the time, and if he or she might be doing something. If a customer found a dealer that was not very alert, he might come back repeatedly to take advantage of her. Crossroaders could mark the cards or switch cards or do anything if the dealer was not paying attention.

If a dealer wasn't doing anything wrong, was just running unlucky, some times we'd move her, thinking that she's be luckier on another table. But we had one table that seemed to lose money no matter who we put on it. Gaming is pe culiar things happen that can't hap pen, but they do. Some tables just couldn't win a bet if they wanted to.

Some dealers were pretty much per manent on one table. You try to be as fair as you can, to get the right person in the right place, and you also try to give them all a chance. Some tables were situated where they didn't make many tips, and we tried to be fair about that and move the dealers around a little, so each got a chance to work on a game that would enable her to make a few tips. But it was good for business to keep a dealer on one game, because when a regular customer came, he knew where she was.

We had a couple of dealers that were there on the same table for almost as long as I can remember. Bessie Hoyt, on swing shift, was on the same table al most forever, and she had one of the best averages in the club. She was on a high limit game, and many customers came in just to play on her game. It was her friendliness and her personality that drew them.

We made it a point to have the friend liest dealers of any club. Actually, we were even more concerned about the way they treated customers than we were about their mechanical ability. As long as they weren't doing anything that would be harmful, like exposing their hole card or showing the top card, they were OK. We weren't as concerned as most casinos are about speed, either. A girl could be a slow dealer as long as she had the personality to attract customers. Our main purpose in the whole thing was to keep the customer in there and happy. The most important factors in scheduling a dealer on a high limit game were personality and honesty.

A table's location in the traffic pat tern had much to do with the play it got and the tips a dealer could make. One table the dealers called "Zipper Gulch." It was back by the men's room, and the only traffic you got was guys going to and from the men's room . . . and that was fast! Dealers would rather have a table that was centrally located and had nice lighting and everything, where they could be more comfortable.

Managers were often accused of fa voritism in scheduling certain dealers on certain table games. Part of the prob lem was that so many of our wives were working there as dealers. [laughter] My



"It was her friendliness and her personality that drew them." Bessie Hoyt dealing twenty-one, c. 1949.

wife was working on a table, and a gal from Texas was relieving her. One day the Texan said, "When Darl comes on shift, I suppose you won't be on this rotten table."

Marj says, "Well, I don't know. We'll see."

So I came on, and I left her there. She and the gal from Texas both stayed there, and finally this girl said to Marj, "I can understand why I'm still on this goddamned table, but you're sleeping with the boss. I don't see why *you* should be here."

I tried very hard to be honest about scheduling my wife. She was an excellent dealer very good mechanically, and she was lucky. She hated to lose. God, if she lost, she'd cry and everything else. You'd be surprised how most dealers felt. They were so loyal to the Smiths that if they lost any money, they were upset about it. They thought they should be winning all the time, and you just don't win all the time in gaming.

There wasn't *that* much favoritism shown, but there was some. I'd be lying if I said there weren't. But most of the wives had been there for a long time, and everybody knew they were honest, because they wouldn't jeopardize their husband's job for anything. Most of them were good mechanical dealers too. And that's what we were looking for: to protect the game and be nice to customers. They knew they had to be, or they'd be in a heap of trouble with their husbands.

The Smiths were responsible for the overall attitude of the club, and it was reflected in the dealers. For instance, if we had a big winner, the Smiths would go over and congratulate him. Maybe they'd buy him lunch or dinner or whatever he wanted, and be happy for him and say, "Good luck and come back." All of them were that way. Harold was good about that, and Raymond I. especially was.

One of the things that was so great about Harolds Club was that if a dealer was losing money, nobody worried about it. Some places, they'd change dealers immediately and that type of thing, but the Smiths would just say, "Well, if you're lucky enough to beat us, good luck."

As long as everything was going honestly, they were really happy to have winners. They would say, "You have to send out winners to have customers," which is the truth. And if a customer plays long enough in any game I don't care what it is he's going to pay the price.

Harold himself was a gambler. He knew how it was when you won, and he knew how it was when you lost. He was very compassionate when a person was losing money, but he was also happy when they were winning a little bit, as long as everything was on the square. That attitude went all the way through, even to the newest employee, the newest change apron. They had instilled in them that friendliness was the most important thing.

Harold had some real funny ideas. He said you could take any beautiful woman and make a slut out of her by putting a stick of gum in her mouth. That and mustaches he had a thing against mustaches. Harold was pretty hard nosed about a lot of things, where Raymond I. was a lot easier.

Raymond I. saw more of the overall picture of the entire operation than Harold, who was more focused on the table games. Harold didn't have enough patience, I think, to watch the whole situation. Raymond I. would get information from everybody and listen to everybody,

but Harold was pretty opinionated and a little hot headed, and he'd sometimes do things that would be off the cuff.

After Raymond I. died, the club ran along pretty good for a while. Then it just seemed that things got a little bit I can't explain exactly, but we didn't have the same leadership. Raymond I. and Harold had been really good for each other, because one would counterbal ance the other. For instance, each had his own stool pigeons they would be around the club all the time and report to Raymond I. or to Harold. Therefore, whatever happened, the other one knew what was going on almost imme diately. But without Mr. Smith there, there was no counterbalance for Harold. Whatever he wanted to do, that was the way it was, and it wasn't always correct.

We were really shocked when we learned the club was to be sold. There was a feeling that the Smiths were sort of letting us down. I tried to get something started, whereby, if they were going to sell the club, why wouldn't they let the employees have first chance to buy it? I couldn't get anybody to follow suit on that. When we heard that the buyer was going to be Howard Hughes, I was thrilled. I thought, "Well, if they have to sell it, we should be in really good shape with Howard Hughes. We'll have all the money we need to do all the advertis ing and go every place and expand and build a hotel and the whole ball of wax."

After the sale, I retained the title of shift manager, but when Hughes took over, they brought a bunch of people up from Las Vegas to supervise every thing, and they took away almost my entire authority. All I had to do was go in and be at work. I couldn't make a deci sion; I couldn't help the kids if they had a problem; I couldn't help the customers. I was getting shift manager's wages, had a month's vacation with pay, and had all the perks that go with being a boss, but I couldn't stand it, because they just did not treat customers and employees the way I felt they should.

They put Dan Orlich in for a while as casino manager in the interim, so we ini tially reported to Dan. After that, I re ported to nobody, because I had noth ing to do. They were just . . . it was a pe culiar situation. You just came in and put in your eight hours and went home, and I kept going home a little more ashen every day. Finally my wife said, "Why don't you quit?"

I'd been there almost twenty five years, and it's awfully hard to just go in and quit a job. But the way they ran things down south and the way we ran things in the northern part of the state were altogether different. They couldn't believe that we could be nice and still make money, so we lost many of our re ally good customers in that period of time, and it made me ill.

With the Hughes people, there was a complete turnaround, not only in cus tomer relations, but in dealer relations. We had tables scattered all over the place without pits, and as soon as they came in, they closed the games that were too scattered to employ the pit boss model and made pits out of every thing else. We had several games that were all by themselves, high limit games that we made money on, but they wouldn't allow them to stay. Like Room 25 we had two high limit games in there that were very good table games as far as making money, but there were only two tables, and they couldn't stand to have them operate without somebody supervising them. So they closed those and made everything into pits and put pit bosses into each of them.

Another thing that happened to change the atmosphere was that dealers who were married to a supervisor, floor manager, or assistant floor manager were terminated almost immediately, because the Hughes people felt that there would be collusion somewhere along the line. It appeared that they just didn't trust anyone.

I quit Harolds Club in June of 1971 and went to work for Jessie Beck at the Riverside. After a year or so, I left to help George Smith start a club up at the lake, and then for a couple of years I was like just about everybody else in the gaming business, moving from club to club. I finally found myself back at Harolds Club, which by then was being managed by the group that included Phil Griffith, Max Page, and Terry Oliver. Fred Hopkinson was in charge of security there, and he said, "Yeah Darl, come back to work."

So, after all my years of experience in management, I went to work as a security person up in the surveillance room at Harolds Club. We had a bunch of monitors up there on all the games, and we'd sit and watch those. I stayed there until I retired.

PART III
Dealers Reminisce

Dealers Reminisce

Edited by Kathleen Coles

On three occasions in May of 1999, groups of former Harolds Club dealers got together in the home of Marjorie and Darl Voss to reminisce about their years with the club and to share anecdotes about members of the Smith family. These gatherings were moderated and recorded by Dwayne Kling, himself a former club employee. On the following pages, edited transcripts of the tapes are presented in three chapters, in the order in which the groups of dealers were hired.

18

Hired in the 1940s

Midge Hogan, Margaret Brown, Dorothy Whitton Canby, Louise Jones, Lucille Vinson Peterson, Mary Bletcher, Marjorie Voss, Pat Applewhite, Jean Pinkerton, and Rosalie Beasley, who was hired in the 1960s.

Dwayne Kling[DK]: I am going to start by asking each of you when and how you were hired. How about you, Midge? What year were you were hired?

Midge Hogan[MH]: Well, the first time I got hired was 1942, and I worked on the penny roulette wheel. The way I got hired was that Pappy asked me to add a few numbers, which I did, and he said, "Go to work." So I went to work on the penny roulette wheel. I never filled out any application.

DK: Did you walk up to Pappy and ask for a job, or did he walk up to you?

MH: I don't remember who walked up to whom. I probably asked Pappy, because he took me behind the wheel to test my addition.

DK: Do you remember your starting wage?

MH: Twenty dollars a week.

DK: How many days a week did you work?

MH: Six.

DK: Who taught you how to deal penny roulette?

MH: Doris Rose, and her mother, Ruby Nash, who was working there, too.

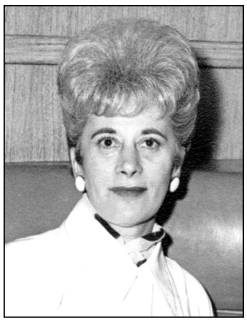
DK: Margaret, when did you get hired?

Margaret Brown[MR]: 1944.

DK: Was the club open twenty four hours a day when you went to work, Margaret?



Pat Applewhite



Rosalie Beasley



Mary Bletcher



Margaret Brown



Midge Hogan



Louise Jones



Lucille Vinson Peterson



Jean Pinkerton



Marjorie Voss



Dorothy Whitton-Canby

MR: Yes.

MH: I only worked six months the first time I worked there, and I worked at the penny roulette the entire time. "Big Bill" Wilson was the lookout.

DK: Would you explain what a lookout on a wheel is?

MH: It was a great big wheel, and when we would spin the wheel, Bill Wilson would watch what the people did on the table. He sat up on a platform on a high stool so he could watch for people trying to cheat.

DK: What year did you start, Dorothy?

Dorothy Whitton Canby[DW]: I started either late 1946 or early 1947, and Jessie Beck Howard was her name then hired me.

DK: How did she happen to hire you? Were you in looking for a job?

DW: There were big signs in front of Harolds Club that said that they needed cashiers, and so I applied. Jessie said that they had all the help they needed in the office that's the only type of work that I had ever done but that they needed dealers, and would I like to learn to deal? And I said, "Well, I don't know."

And she says, "Well, why don't you try?" She says, "You're just the type of woman that I think Pappy would like."

And I said, "OK." So, she had me count a deck of cards down completely to the end.

And she says, "You're right on the nose." She says, "Go to work." That's all there was to it. It was that easy.

DK: Do you recall your starting wage?

DW: Yes, six dollars a day.

DK: So, you didn't have to fill out an application, either?

DW: No, I didn't.

DK: Did anyone here ever fill out an application? How about you, Louise? What year did you start?

Louise Jones[LJ]: In 1949.

DK: Did you fill out an application?

LJ: Yes.

DK: How about you, Lucille? When did you start?

Lucille Peterson[LP]: I started in 1945, and I filled out an application. The only rea son I know I did is because I was still twenty years old. My birthday was in Sep tember, and I applied in either May or June. I figured I was closer to twenty one than twenty, so when I got my fingerprint card, I said my birthday was June instead of September, so I know I had to have filled out an application. Jessie Beck hired me. Pappy wanted me to enter the Miss Nevada Contest, but I didn't want to. I told him that I had to pay my rent. I was living with two other girls; we had an apartment. And so, I just wouldn't try out for Miss Nevada. That's all there was to it. So anyway, then they put me on a twenty one table, and another dealer taught me to deal. Then in July, they had some kind of a game outside, where you had to hustle up people to come over and play. The game was under these numbers outside.

DK: And you were doing that out on the street?

LP: Yes, they had me out there.

DK: Was it like three card monte?

LP: I think there were just lots of num bers. But anyway, I didn't like doing that, either.

DK: And they allowed him to operate that gambling game on the sidewalk?

LP: Yes, yes.

DK: Did any of the rest of you ever deal that game or recall it?

MH: Yes, I was out there, but I don't re member anything about it.

DK: Did Pappy ever go out there and hustle up a game?

LP: Oh, I'm sure.

DK: It would be his kind of game, wouldn't it?

LP: Right, right.

DK: Mary, when did you start?

Mary Bletcher[ML]: 1946.

DK: Did you fill out an application, Mary?

ML: No. A friend and I were traveling cross country, and it was too cold in San Francisco, so we decided to come to Reno for a day. While I was at the hotel, she called me and said, "Come on. We have an interview for a job." She said, "You sit on the stool, because you're so short that they'll never hire you for a dealer." Jim Hunter hired us, and he said we should smile, and that was all the in structions we got. My first job was Marj Voss's check racker.



A Harolds Club barbecue on the Jack Filtzer Ranch in 1942. Harold Sr. is in the center of the first row wearing dark glasses.

DK: Did Marj teach you twenty one, too?

ML: No, Jack Shaver did that. One day I was check racking with Marj, and he says, "Go to that table. We need to open up a game."

I says, "I don't deal twenty one."

And he said, "You have a button on the wall in back of you; push it if you get in trouble." He said, "Just shuffle and go from there." I guess I got through it somehow.

DK: You didn't have to carry change? You went right to racking checks?

ML: Yes. I went right to check racking.

MH: I didn't carry change, either.

DK: Did you, Marj?

Marjorie Voss[MV]: Nobody carried change in those days, because there were so few slots.

LP: I carried change off and on every time they'd get mad at me. [laughter] I carried change for about a month or two for punishment. I never knew what I did, you know, but I did something wrong.

DK: [laughter] You mean you don't re member?

LP: No, I was a left handed dealer. I broke all kinds of rules.

DK: Two war brides, Pat Applewhite and Jean Pinkerton, are here today. Who started work first?

JP: I started in April, 1946.

DK: Where did you come from?

JP: Edinburgh, Scotland. I stayed with my brother in Long Island for about three months before I came out here.

DK: Had you married a serviceman? Is that how you came to Reno?

JP: Yes, I married a serviceman. I mar ried Ruth Jones's brother, Buddy Howland. That's how I came to Reno.

DK: Was Buddy working in Harolds Club?

JP: No, he was with Harrah's.

DK: Did you come to Reno with Buddy?

JP: No, I came after. We got married after the war. I came out to Reno, and Ruth tried to teach me how to deal twenty one, so when I went up to meet Jessie Beck, I told her I wanted to be a twenty one dealer. And she says, "I don't want you to be a twenty one dealer." She says, "I want you to go on the wheel."

And I said, "What wheel?"

She said, "Roulette wheel."

And I said, "I don't know anything about a roulette wheel."

Then she said to me, "Do you know what a dollar is?"

And I said, "Yes."

She then said, "Do you know what two bits is?"

And I said, "I don't know." I said, "What is two bits?"

She said, "That's a quarter." She said, "So, how many would be in a dol lar?"

And I said, "Well, I guess it would be four."

And she said, "Why don't you go home and come back and see me an other day?"

[group laughter]

JP: So, I went home, and then Ruth went up and talked to her, and she said to Ruth, "I don't think she'd make a good twenty one dealer. I think she'd be bet ter on the wheel."

So, Ruth came back and said, "She thinks you're better on the wheel as a racker."

And I said, "Well, I'll give it a try." So, I went back, and I went on the wheel as a racker.

DK: Did you rack with Marj, too?

JP: No, I didn't. I forget the girl's name, but anyway, she gave me such a bad time. She kept telling me, "Now, if they want to bet two bits on a number, you let them bet two bits on a number." Then she'd say, "Would you hand me over some two bit pieces, please?"

And I said, "Do you mean quar ters?"

Anyway, Jack Shaver decided that we couldn't get along and put me with Annie Lund. And Annie Lund said, "I get shorter rackers all the time." Yes.

[group laughter]

DK: Did you eventually learn to deal twenty one?

JP: Yes.

DK: Did Jack Shaver teach you?

JP: No. Jack put me on twenty one.

MH: But he didn't teach you?

JP: No.

LJ: Dealers taught you. They usually put you with a dealer, and you'd sit and watch the game for a while, and then you'd go in on a game and learn that way.

DK: Did you come over from Australia, Pat?

Patricia Applewhite[PA]: Yes. I came here in 1946. I had to wait till I turned twenty one, and I got hired then. My "in" was through Jean's husband, Bud Howland, and Ruth Dill. Dill was her name then; it's Jones now. She taught me to deal. I racked roulette to get my foot in the door. And then, of course, Ruth taught me to deal, and that's about it. [laughter] I was a war bride, married an American soldier over in Australia. He was in special service and selected people to be in shows that went all around Sydney entertaining American troops. We went to New Guinea for six months, and then we came here for two weeks to visit his brother, and we stayed. And obviously, I had to get a job.

One thing happened to me that set me back when I first started. I first was put on a quarter table. Correct me if I'm wrong, but in those days, you didn't pick up one hand at a time. Everybody turned their hand over, and then you picked them up. Well, in one hand five aces turned up! Somebody said, "Five aces turned up."

And, of course, I went into shock and called my boss, and the boss said, "Well, did anybody make a big bet?"

And I said, "Oh, yes. This man came in, and he was standing up, and he made a twenty dollar bet." [laughter] That was a big bet to me. Well, he'd slipped an ace in on me, which, you know, I thought, "Oh, this is it. I'll be gone." [laughter] That was one cute little thing. And another little thing that I used to think was neat, how Pappy would give us these little pep talks once in a while

that you had to be 75 percent personal ity, 25 percent dealer. He was more in terested in your personality and your being friendly than in your dealing, which I thought was a bit of a help to me. [laughter]

Another thing: we had so much fun in those days. We all had so much fun, didn't we? We were allowed to have fun because of this personality thing, really.

RB: Well, we were one big family. They'd treat us like family.

PA: That's right. That's right.

DK: So, they weren't too strict, as far as rules and regulations were concerned?

PA: No.

RB: Real laid back.

PA: That's right. In other words, we could really have fun.

DK: Was it almost fun to go to work?

PA: Yes, yes.

LJ: Yes. We all looked forward to go ing.

DK: You looked forward to going to work?

RB: More fun than staying home.

LJ: If you came to work feeling de pressed and down, within five minutes, somebody's got you cracking up. You've forgotten all about your problems.

ML: Another great thing about those days was that you would grow up with your customers. They'd come into town and show you their little baby pictures; I'd show them my baby pictures. For twenty years, you'd have the same cus tomer that would come and find you. And if they didn't come in, I'd say, "Where were you? We're going to send the posse out after you if you don't come in every week."

DK: Did a lot of people not play any where except Harolds Club?

LJ: Absolutely.

RB: They liked the dealers.

MV: I had customers that used to come up from Sacramento and play with me. Oh, I'd say every couple of months they'd be in and play. And so, one time, I hadn't seen them for a while, and they came in, and I said, "Oh, it's good to see you. I haven't seen you for a while. How come you haven't been up?"

And they said, "We moved back East. We haven't been here in seven years."

[group laughter]

MV: It seemed like just a short time ago that I'd seen them. But I recognized them. They came to my table just like I was right there waiting for them.

DK: Did a lot of dealers deal the same table?

DW: All the time. All the time. I got a strange toke one time. A man gave me a baby calf. And I said to Pappy, I said, "What am I going to do about this? He's got a calf out here that he gave me."

He says, "Well, go get it, honey." He says, "It's yours."

DK: So, you brought the calf in the club?

DW: No, but I gave it to Georgia Slattery because she lived out on a ranch.

DK: She was a dealer there?

DW: She was a dealer, and her husband was a senator. Georgia said, "We'd like to have that, because we're going to breed it."

And I said, "Be my guest."

And she says, "Well, how much you want for it?"

I said, "Well, when you butcher some of your others, I'll take some of your beef." [laughter]

DK: Yes, that was a good trade.

DW: Yes. But I never will get over Pappy, because he says, "Well," he says, "go get it."

DK: A lot of you mentioned Jessie Howard, or Jessie Howard Beck, who hired you. Do you remember her working on the floor?

MH: Oh, yes. I remember her on the floor.

MV: Yes. In 1945 when I went to work night shift, she was my boss on the floor.

DK: So, she did interviews, and she worked as a floor supervisor?

MV: Yes, she did.

LJ: She was in personnel in 1949. She had hired me.

DW: Wasn't she related to Pappy?

DK: Pappy was married to her sister.

ML: Oh, really? I didn't know.

DW: Yes, right. That was the relationship.

MH: I went to work in 1942, but I only worked six months. I came back in 1945. I was in San Francisco, and Harold was stationed there, and he called Edie Grisham, who practically ran the club. Am I right?

LJ: Yes, she was the credit manager.

MH: So, he called her, and I borrowed fifty dollars and came up on the bus. They put me right to work and moved me in with Tommy Bunton. Do you all remember Tommy?

MV: Oh, yes, I remember Tommy. She was a twenty one dealer.

MH: I moved in with her, because I had the job when I arrived.

DK: Did you start in on the roulette wheel again?

MH: No, I broke in with Fluff Webster on the big limit twenty one table.

DK: Was Fluff married to Chuck Webster then?

MH: Yes. And I don't remember when I married Ray Webster, Chuck's brother.

DK: I didn't know that. Is that why they called it the family club?

[group laughter]

LJ: We just passed them around.

RB: That's why I left Elko. I had married everybody.

LP: You know, I actually didn't start on twenty one. I started on the dime dice

table. In the back pit, there were four tables, and one was a ten cent dice game.

DK: Margaret, did you say you started on roulette?

MR: Yes, for a short time, and Pappy asked me if I was happy dealing roulette, and I said, "No, I'd rather deal twenty one." So he put me on twenty one.

DK: Why weren't you happy dealing roulette?

MR: I don't know. [laughter]

DW: Probably you weren't making enough money.

MR: No, no, no, no. To me the last thing I would think about was money.

DK: When you're talking about the money, you're talking about tips (tokens), right?

LJ: Right.

DK: Even in the 1940s, roulette dealers didn't make many tips?

MR: I never even thought about tips then. All I thought about was dealing, being able to deal.

LJ: Well, I thought about tips.

MH: Me, too.

MV: All of us thought about tips.

LJ: You had to, with those low wages.

MV: I think the tips were pretty good on roulette in the 1940s when I first went there. Then they kind of took a slump, and about that time is when I started to go on twenty one.

DK: How many of you dealt chuck a luck?

MV: Not I.

DW: I did for two days.

DK: For two days? [laughter]

MH: I did for a day or two. I didn't like it.

DW: I remember Pappy telling me, he says, "Our receipts are picking up, kid. I think I'll keep you here," and my face dropped. [laughter] Because I thought, "I don't want to stay here." Then Pappy said, "Well, we'll put you on twenty one." In fact, Scherry Harrah it was Scherry Teague then was the dealer.

DK: She was the one who taught you to deal?

DW: She was one of my teachers, and she told me then, she says, "I'm either going to marry Bill Harrah or Raymond A.[Smith]." I remember that. She planned it.

MV: She probably had her pick.

LP: She was a beautiful girl.

MV: She was really a pretty girl.

DW: Anyway, she taught me a little, and then they put me on a quarter table, and a man was nailing my cards.

DK: What's "nailing a card" mean?

DW: Marking it with fingernails. So, Chuck Webster took me off the table, and he

says, "I want to show you what they're doing to you."

So, I said, "Hmm. They cheat in here. I quit."

So, I started walking out the door, and Pappy ran after me, and he says, "Where are you going, kid?"

And I said, "I'm going home."

He said, "Why are you going home? We want you to stay here with us."

"I'm going home. I've got a little boy at home," and I said, "I can't take the graveyard shift."

And he says, "Well, we'll put you on days, kid. Come on, let's have a cup of coffee." And so I stayed on days.

RB: They were that way.

PA: I'll tell you what I think was another interesting thing. I worked there all those years, and I don't know whether I was more green than anybody else, but I didn't even know there was a catwalk until Marj Voss told me. I said, "What's a catwalk?"

DK: Do you recall them having a cat walk in the 1940s?

JP: Oh, sure.

MH: They had a lookout that fell through the ceiling one time.

ML: I remember that. He fell right through the ceiling.

MH: Yes, I saw him, and I remember somebody saying, "If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake." I re member he fell right through the ceiling.

DK: Did Harold go in the catwalk?

DW: Yes, yes.

JP: The door was in the Roaring Camp Room.

DK: So, you could see people when they went into the catwalk?

JP: Yes, yes.

DK: When you went to work there dur ing the war, were there a lot of military people in the club?

MH: I don't recall, but I'm sure there were quite a few.

DW: There were several. There were a lot.

MV: On night shift, you got more military.

ML: But on day shift, you didn't.

MV: On weekends, it would be packed.

DK: Were they stationed in local areas, such as Fallon or Reno?

MV: In Reno there was an air base called Reno Army Base, and there was a navy base in Fallon.

MV: We got the sailors in from Fallon. That's where I met my husband.

PA: Yes, I was going to say. Darl (Marj's husband) was one of those little sailor boys. [laughter]

MH: Cute one, too.

DK: When the troop trains stopped, would the troops come in the club?

MH: I don't recall any of them coming in, no.

MV: I don't know if they were a group of men off a troop train or from the local

bases. I just thought they were from the Reno Air Base.

DW: I know Pappy used to buy their din ners and give them a little money to gamble.

DK: Do any of you remember African Americans coming in during the war?

MH: Yes, yes.

DW: But they didn't play.

MH: They did come in, but they weren't allowed to play.

DK: Do you remember them coming in, Marj?

MV: Well, what I remember particularly is that Georgia Slattery was the first per son I knew that refused to deal to a black soldier. And she got off the table. She refused to deal to him because he was a black, and they let him stay and play.

DK: Much later in time there was a fel low named Leroy Badie, who worked at the New China Club as a pit boss and floor manager. He used to come in and play twenty one all the time, play a little bit of craps, too. And Harolds Club hired him as the first black dealer, and he dealt for a very, very short time. They basically hired him to put him on the floor. I would say Leroy was probably hired in 1964. Were you there when he was hired, Mar garet?

MR: I was not there.

RB: I was there when he was hired. He was nice. I liked him.

ML: Didn't they have a sit in some time?

DK: Does anyone recall a sit in?

ML: Yes. They came in a bus.

DK: What time frame do you think that was?

ML: I don't know, but they came to Bessie Hoyt's table, and they all sat, and no one did a thing. It was very quiet. They came in, and there were quite a few. Because usually they would just dribble in, but this was a big bus. I think it was called a sit in. But there was no problem, and we let them sit. That was the begin ning of the Civil Rights Movement.

DK: So, this was much later. This was like the early 1960s?

DW: Yes.

DK: Do you remember blacks coming in during the war, Midge?

MH: Yes. They came in, and they were treated nicely but were asked to go. They were told, "You have a club on Lake Street." The bosses were very nice to them. It was the bosses that went up to them and said, "We're sorry, but we can't deal to you, but there is a real nice place on Lake Street."

DK: Did most of them leave with no problems?

MH: Oh, yes. The bosses were very cour teous to them, I thought.

DK: Do you recall that, Margaret?

MR: Right after the end of the war, two of them came into Harolds Club in uni form and sat down to play. Well, nobody knew what to do. So, they talked with

Pappy, and Pappy said, "They're good enough to fight for our country; they're good enough to play."

RB: One time there was this black fel low playing with me, and he kept call ing me "honey."

"Hit me, honey."

I didn't pay any attention to that, just like nothing, you know. Then Darl came up, and he said, "Her name is Rosalie. See her name tag?"

He said, "Hit me, Rosalie, honey."

[group laughter]

RB: I thought that was real cute. "Hit me, Rosalie, honey."

DK: Do you remember African Ameri cans, Louise, or having any trouble with them?

LJ: No, no trouble. I just knew that they weren't supposed to play.

MH: The club had the buzzers, and when they'd sit down, we'd hit the buzzers, and then a floor boss would come up and handle it. We weren't supposed to handle it.

DW: No, and we didn't.

LJ: No, it was just an understanding that we had.

DK: Lucille?

LP: The Indians couldn't play there, ei ther. And the day that they allowed In dians to drink legally, we had Indians for the first time in the Roaring Camp Room drinking. Now, I don't remember as far as gambling goes, but they were at the bar.

DK: Do you have any idea of the time frame on that?

LP: Well, it would be some time right after the Roaring Camp Room was open. So it had to be somewhere in the 1950s that the Indians were allowed to drink in the casinos.

JP: In 1949 I went over to the Roaring Camp[1] on Lake Street to deal, when Midge and Arleta Manzelli got in that big wreck, and I took Arleta's place on the wheel. Big Ramona ran the Mexican res taurant there.

DK: I've heard about Big Ramona. How big was she?

MH: She was big. She was an easy six foot tall, maybe more.

JP: Were you there when she fell on the escalator and broke her leg?

MH: Broke her leg, yes.

JP: I don't know how many bouncers and floor bosses it took to help lift her up and get her into the ambulance.

DK: Well, how much do you think Ramona weighed?

MV: Three hundred.

LP: Three hundred fifty.

LP: At least three hundred fifty. Three hundred seventy.

DK: What nationality was Ramona?

JP: Indian.

MH: No, Mexican, wasn't she?

LP: She was Mexican, because she had a Mexican restaurant named Ramona's in there.

DK: Did Ramona own the restaurant?

LP: Yes, and Pappy bought the Roar ing Camp from Raymond Stagg, and Harolds operated it after that.

JP: Pappy always had an escort for us to go back and forth from Harolds Club to Lake Street.

DK: How many games did they have at Roaring Camp when Harolds owned it?

JP: They had the wheel and a dice table, and I think there were three twenty one games.

JP: Mary Tout was the boss over there, and we wore those long, cotton, West ern gowns when we worked there.

DK: So, you would work part time at Harolds Club and part time at the Roar ing Camp?

JP: Yes, it belonged to Harolds Club.

ML: It had a big fireplace in the middle of the room.

LP: There was one on the second floor of Harolds Club in the Roaring Camp room, too, a big fireplace.

JP: Didn't Arleta's husband tend bar at the Roaring Camp?

MH: Yes, Frank Manzelli.

DK: Midge, did you and Arleta get in a terrible automobile accident?

MH: Yes, a real bad one. We were in the hospital for three months.

DK: Were you on your way to work?

MH: No, I was on my way to see a cow boy.

[group laughter]

DK: Where did you have to go to find a cowboy?

MH: Yerington. What's that big ranch down in Yerington? I've forgotten what the name of it was. But we went down there. I was chasing a cowboy.

[group laughter]

DK: Did he catch you?

MH: Well, maybe.

I forget who took me into the hospi tal, but then Jim Hunter sent an ambu lance down to get us and brought us back to Saint Mary's.

PA: How about advertising? "Harolds Club or Bust" was all over the world. That was interesting.

DK: Tell us about that.

PA: Well, I told you I spent six months in New Guinea, and I saw those signs there.

DK: There were Harolds Club signs in New Guinea?

PA: Yes, and this would be during the war, like about 1942 or 1943.

MH: On VJ day, they closed down the whole town of Reno.

DK: Oh, really?

MH: The whole town. Everybody closed down, and there was dancing in the streets. We had a big party out at George Caudle's home.

PA: Well, there were only three times they closed Harolds Club, right? The end of the war, wasn't that one?

MH: That was one, on VJ day.

PA: Yes. And what were the other two?

LP: When the Golden Hotel burned, and when Pappy passed away.

DW: Also, during Easter, they would close in the afternoon. On Good Friday they always closed for three hours.

MV: In the winter of 1945, they closed the graveyard shift for about a month or two. You can check that out. They closed and laid off a whole shift, because I was one of them that got laid off. I went to work in September, and I got laid off in Febru ary, because they closed a whole shift down. The government made them do it.

DK: Midge, didn't you talk to me about the curfews that closed the clubs?

MH: Yes, they closed them at two o'clock. It was a curfew imposed by the federal government.

DK: I wasn't there at the time, but I heard that when Kennedy died, they closed the club. I was there when Pappy died, and I don't recall it closing when Pappy died.

During the 1940s, were there many female customers? I've heard that at a certain time, women didn't want to come in the club, because they were intimidated by the gambling. Do any of you remember that?

MV: I don't remember that, at all.

LP: I don't, either.

RB: I think when the women started dealing, other women started coming in.

RB: Men would bring their wives and girlfriends, their dates.

DK: I'm going to pass around a picture that Lucille brought in. It is a picture of the big hats that the dealers wore dur ing the 1940s.

LJ: It was called the Cockeyed Hour. Someone got the bright idea of wearing these big hats. We all had to wear them, and if a customer wanted to buy them, we'd sell them one. The customers liked the hats. They looked like something Carmen Miranda would wear. They were really big and ostentatious.

DK: Who got the money when you sold them?

LJ: Not the dealers.

[group laughter]

LP: I was told that it went to a good cause.

DK: [laughter]

LJ: I'm sure it did.

LP: I don't know whose good cause it was.

DK: After you sold the hat, did you get another hat?

MH: Yes, you did.

JP: I hated those things. Oh, they looked awful.

DK: I still don't understand the purpose of the hats.

MH: Well, some girl got the idea, and she gave it to Pappy, and he thought it was fun. He thought it was a great idea.

LP: He had hundreds of hats made up. Then we had to wear them until we sold them. And, of course, we all tried to sell them as fast as possible.

MR: They were heavy.

LJ: The men had to wear them too, didn't they? Did the men have to wear them?

MR: I don't know.

DK: Let's talk about the "once only" book. Rosalie, would you explain what the once only book was?

RB: Well, when you gambled and went broke, they lent you twenty five dollars, and it was called a once only.

DK: Why was it called a once only?

RB: Because you could only get it once. Once a year. But you could get it every year. So, I'd gamble, and I was "live." I'd tip everybody, and when I'd go broke, everybody would give me their once only so I could play some more.

DW: Well, if you paid it back, you could get it again. And I remember it was fifty dollars.

LJ: I do, too.

RB: It was twenty five.

LJ: That's what I got, fifty.

DK: I think it changed over the years.

MV: I don't remember it in the 1940s.

DK: Do you remember it, Midge?

MH: Yes, but I can't remember whether it was in the 1940s or not. But they always took care of the people that went broke. They'd give them money to go home on, to eat on, gas money, whatever.

DW: I know there was one time they gave a certain person here in Reno $5,000.

ML: Pappy would come around and just reach in the tray and take money and give it to the people. He did that all the time.

MH: Oh, we used to get good bonuses.

DK: At Christmas time?

MH: Yes. I remember one time, I got, I think, $2,200.

RB: Wow.

MV: Was that back in the 1940s? I don't think they gave that much in the 1940s.

MR: I don't think so, either.

ML: Didn't you get twenty five dollars for every year, or every month, that you worked?

LP: Every year.

MH: The last year I got $2,500. I remember that, and I couldn't tell you what year it was.

LP: Nineteen fifty three was the last year. Nineteen fifty three was when we bought the ranch, and we were sweating that Christmas bonus. When we bought the place, we said that in six months, which would have been Christmas, we would give them the down payment. And we got either a three thousand or thirty five hundred dollar bonus. [Note: Lucille was married to a gentleman named Skip Vinson, who was a floor boss.] So that was our down payment on the ranch that we bought for $12,500. I think we got bonuses for about five years before that, so we got them approximately five years. So it had to be about 1948 that he started giving the bonus.

DK: How did he give it to you?

LP: At the Christmas party at his home.

MH: He gave it to us in an envelope, but the government later stopped him from doing that.

DK: So, he gave you cash. There was nothing withheld?

LP: That's right. There was also a lay off every Christmas Eve, and you never knew if you were going to be laid off or not. Christmas Eve was a nightmare every year. I didn't know if I was going to have a job the next day or not, because invariably, that was the day you got laid off.

DK: Was that where Skip (Vinson) got his bonus, at Pappy's house?

LP: Yes, they had a big party and handed them out.

DK: Where was Pappy living then?

LP: In his new home, his last home, on Patrick Street.

MV: We had good ball teams in the 1940s.

DK: Yes, they had a softball team and a baseball team, didn't they, Mary?

ML: Yes, and they used to travel a lot.

DK: Tell us about your husband that played on the team.

ML: My husband's name was Bill Bletcher, and they had a pretty good team, as I remember.

MV: I think they hired these fellows especially because they were good ball players. Isn't that why they were hired?

ML: Yes, Bill was from Taft, California, and was on his way to Alaska to hunt bear when he bumped into Pat Peeples, who was a pitcher, and Glen Neely. They said, "Bill, stay here in Reno and play ball with us." So he stayed here, and that is how he got to Harolds Club.

DK: Where did you meet Bill?

ML: There used to be big July Fourth dances out in the street. And I was on a break, and Bill said to Al Lazzarone, "Why don't you ask girls to dance?"

And Al says, "Why don't *you* ask them?" And so, that's when we met.

DK: Was Bill working in Harolds Club then?

ML: He was working graveyard, and I was working swing.

DK: Did any of you ever go to those games?

ML: They didn't have many here; they traveled a lot.

MV: When they played in Reno we went to the games.

DK: We talked just a little bit about supervisors, and the only names we came up with were Jessie Howard Beck and George Caudle.

DW: Lindy was a floor boss, a red headed floor boss.

DK: What was her full name?

MV: Ruth Linderman. And Ruth Fuller was another lady floor boss.

MH: Also, there was Jack Shaver.

DK: Was the club pretty small in the 1940s?

MH: Yes, one passageway from Virginia Street down to the alley and out the back.

DW: It was an L shape.

LP: The front door was on Virginia Street.

PA: It was like a passageway with slots on both sides, and there were mirrors along the wall.

PA: Didn't they have a horse race book up against the wall?

MV: That was by the back bar, they used to have horse race betting during the day where the back bar was.

PA: Was that in the 1940s?

MV: That was in the 1940s, because my stepfather spent every day down there.

JP: Yes, I remember that.

MV: That was his office.

MH: I remember when they had a shooting back there.

MH: A man came in the back door with a gun in his hand with the police behind him. And remember old Bill Reader, the cop? He got shot through the hand near Annie Lund's roulette table. I went under the table.

ML: And I froze. They said, "Everybody under the table," and I froze. He walked right by me with his gun, and I froze.

I have one more thing. I was working by the back bar, and some man takes a bottle out of his hip pocket and starts drinking out of it. Jack Shaver came by, and I says, "Jack, he's drinking in front of me out of a bottle."

And Jack says, "Honey, you're out West now."

DK: Midge, would you tell me a little bit about Harold Smith Sr.?

MH: Harold Smith, as far as I was concerned, was *the* man. I hardly knew Pappy, but I sure knew Harold.

DK: Was Harold in the club more?

MH: Oh, yes, yes. He was down on the floor. Pappy was mostly upstairs, but Harold was all over the place. You never did anything without Harold.

DK: What shift did you work, mainly?

MH: I worked them all, but I first started on graveyard. Harold was real good to

me. He sent me up from San Francisco; he himself made the arrangements to put me to work. I hardly knew Pappy, but I did know Harold. He was good to me.

DK: Rosalie, tell me about Harold Jr. He was in the club a lot when you were there, wasn't he?

RB: Yes, he was. He hired me. When I started, you had to have an interview with Esther Stephens, then Steve Derrivan, then Harold Jr. He's the one that hired me. So, I liked him from then on. When Louise Jones and I went to Europe, we stayed with him on our vacation when he was in Brussels. He met us at the plane with flowers and got us a room at his ho tel, gave us his car to drive around Eu rope. He was a good guy.

MH: Harold Jr. used to sit on my lap, and he was the most loving boy. He was just a sweetheart.

RB: Yes. I felt bad when he passed away; it was the end of an era.

LP: Harold Jr.'s actual name given at birth was Raymond. He had it changed to Harold Jr. when he was older, I guess, eighteen. I babysat Harold Jr. Raymond, his name was then when he was about thirteen, fourteen, maybe twelve, somewhere in there. I had to go down to the Roaring Camp on Lake Street for some reason, and he wanted to go with me. So, I let him play the nickel machines down there, which, I guess, I wasn't supposed to do. But anyway, he wanted to play, so we got back in a cor ner where no one could see us, and I let him play the nickel machines.

DK: Who furnished the nickels?

LP: I probably did.

RB: From then on, he liked gambling.

[group laughter]

LP: And as far as Harold Sr. goes, he was always wonderful to us. We used to go out all the time with him and see all the floor shows.

DK: You and your husband went out on double dates with Harold Sr.?

LP: Yes, and he would hunt with Skip. Skip and Harold Sr. would go pheasant hunting and do a lot of hunting together.

DK: So, Harold Sr. liked to shoot and hunt?

LP: Oh, yes.

DK: What do you remember about Pappy, Margaret?

MR: A lot of things, but not in the 1940s.

DK: Yes, you started in the 1940s.

MR: I started in the 1940s, but I was on graveyard mostly, and we didn't see much of him on graveyard. We had George Caudle and Jack Shaver and Jim Hunter, but not Pappy.

DK: Was he doubling the bets even when you started there, Pat?

PA: Yes, yes.

LP: He'd go out and double everyone's bets.

LJ: When did that start, Lucille?

LP: I'm trying to think, but I think that was in the 1940s, the late 1940s. And he'd even pay double if there was a tip up to

the dealer, he'd double the bet for the dealer.

LJ: And if you didn't go broke, he'd say, "Oh, you don't know how to deal. Get out of here." He'd take the deck and deal and say, "You don't know how to deal."

RB: He'd hit twenty. Pappy would hit twenty or nineteen until he went broke, so that the player won, no matter what they had bet. People used to follow him from table to table.

LJ: He didn't care.

RB: I know he didn't care, and some of those people were $500 bettors. They'd follow him from high limit table to high limit table.

LJ: Oh, he got it all back, plus more.

MR: [laughter]

DK: How about you, Jean? Did you see a lot of Senior or Pappy?

JP: Well, I saw mostly Harold Sr.

DK: What shift were you working?

JP: I was on days and night shift, but mostly on the day shift. I wanted to go back home to Scotland on a visit. Chuck Webster wouldn't give me time off. Then one day I was talking with Betty Barlow on the table, and Harold Sr. came up, put his head between us, wanted to know who we were gossiping about. And I said, "We're not gossiping about any body."

And I thought, "I'm going to ask Harold if I can get permission to go home in June and July." And so I said, "Harold."

He says, "What do you want?"

And I said, "I want to ask a favor."

And he said, "What's the favor?"

And I said, "Well, I'd like to go back home in the summertime, maybe June and July, but," I said, "Chuck won't give me the time off."

And he said, "You know, you've got a lot of nerve to ask me for time off to go back home." So, he walked away and left me. The next morning I'm on a table back by the bar, and he pipes out into the mike, "Well, wee bit of Scotland, don't we have anyone to gossip with this morning?" And I tell you, I wanted to sink through the floor. So, Jim Hunter comes out of the office, and Harold comes over to the table. He said, "Jim, she had the nerve to ask me could she go back to Scotland June, July, August, September."

I said, "Harold, you're exaggerating. All I'm asking is two months off. I'm not asking you to pay my way."

So, he looks up to Jim, and he says, "What do you think?"

"Harold," he said, "you're the boss." Jim walks away.

"Jim, come back. Shall we let her go?"

He said, "You're the boss."

He said, "OK, you can go." So, I tell Mr. Webster. He doesn't talk to me from then on. I come back from Scotland, and he says, "I've got no room on the shift for you."

So, I went upstairs, and there was a sign on Harold's office door: "Sleeping."

Esther Stephens said, "He just got back from the World Series. He's tired." So, I wrote a note, and I stuffed it under the door, and Esther said, "I'll see that he gets it." So, little while later, Esther calls me, "Mr. Hunter said that you have to come back to work, and would tomor row be convenient?" When I went back, Chuck didn't talk to me for almost a year.

DK: No kidding?

JP: I met him one day at the golf course, and he says, "Come on, you might as well ride with me. I can't stay mad at you forever."

DK: Did Harold Sr. always call you "a wee bit of Scotland?"

JP: Oh, he called me a lot of names.

[group laughter]

DK: Another name that's been men tioned a lot today is Jim Hunter. Do you have any remembrance of Jim Hunter, Louise?

LJ: Oh, he was wonderful.

DK: What was his title?

LJ: He was a general manager, wasn't he?

MV: Not in the 1940s.

LJ: Well, he was when I went to work there. He was very much in the casino after my child was born, which was 1949.

MR: In the 1940s, he was on graveyard a lot.

MV: But he wasn't a general manager, was he?

MR: I don't know.

MV: I remember him standing around playing roulette.

LJ: He was the one I went to, if I wanted anything.

MH: Oh, he loved to play those dollar machines.

LJ: Oh, yes. And I was madly in love with him.

JP: Oh, really?

LJ: Unrequited love.

DK: Really?

LJ: Yes. He didn't know it. I didn't know it, either, until a little later.

LP: He was playing the dollar machine one night, and he said, "Here, Lucille, it's going to hit," and he put three dollars in it, and it hit. [laughter]

DK: Where would he get all the money to play the dollar slot machines?

MR: I think a lot of times he was just fill ing in time watching.

LJ: I don't think so.

MR: On graveyard, I think he was.

MV: I always had a feeling he was al most like a stool pigeon, when we first went to work there in 1945.

DW: I agree with you.

MV: Yes, indeed. He worked for Mr. Smith closely, and a lot of us had that feeling.

PA: And a lot of that went on in those days.

LP: Talking about what you just said about stool pigeons, do you remember old Marie that used to hang around in

the 1940s, that wore the long, black coat and the little, black hat? Well, she was a shill that reported you to Pappy if you were doing anything wrong. So, he did have, in those days, shills that worked as spies.

DK: Spies?

LP: Well, we called them stool pigeons.

DK: Did Harold Sr. have stoolies too, or just Pappy?

LP: Who knows?

LJ: He may have had some that volun teered. Pappy paid you to be a stool pi geon. He offered me the job, and when I refused, he said, "Goddamn it, I'm try ing to help you."

DW: Harold made the down payment on my home. Not personally, but gam bling, helping himself to the tray.

DK: Harold Sr.?

DW: Yes.

DK: By tipping you?

DW: By tipping me, yes.

DK: So, he would reach in the tray, grab the money, and bet it for you?

DW: He would take money out of the tray, and he would take $500 or so at a time and just play it.

DK: And when he won money, he would give it to you as a tip?

DW: Well, no, what he did was, he lost quite a bit first. That's quite a story. I don't know whether I should tell it or not, but he was drinking, and people know Harold did drink quite a bit. Well, it was the days when you raised or lowered the tables with wooden blocks; it was before the hydraulic tables. I wanted the table raised, because Harold was a perfection ist in dealing, and I was afraid that I would expose my hole card. So, I said, "Harold, would you mind very much if I raised the table."

Well, he was drinking, and he was angry, so he said, "In the middle of a high limit game, she wants the table raised," and goes over and sits down by the bar. They raise the table, and then he comes back, and he says, "Are you ready now?"

That hit me wrong, so I spread my deck, and I said, "Harold, this money belongs to you. Help yourself." And I walked off the table.

I went into the restroom, and Chuck Webster followed me. And he says, "Dottie, you get back on that table and deal."

"I'm not going to."

"You go back on that table. Harold wants to apologize, and you do have a family to support," which I did have two children I was supporting by myself. So, I went back on the table, and I dealt, tears rolling down my eyes, because I was still angry. And he got his money back, and he gave me $500, which in those days, could make a down payment on a home.

So, he says, "I'm giving you this." In fact, it's in his book, *I Want To Quit Win ners*.

DK: Oh, it is?

DW: It says, "He gave the divorcée $500, and she was supposed to buy a Chris tian Dior dress, and she put it down on a

'rosebush,'" he called it. So, I bought my home with it, and he didn't speak to me for quite a while. And then one day, I thought, "This has got to end." So, he was eating upstairs that's when we had our restaurant upstairs and I said, "Harold, if you were raising two children, and you had a dog, and you didn't have a home, would you buy a brand new suit, or would you buy a house?"

And he says, "OK, I forgive you. But young lady, I want you to know that when somebody gives you something, it should be spent on what he gives it to you for." And that's the way he felt. He wanted me to buy a Christian Dior dress.

JP: Do you know anything about Harold and John Noble, when they went to tour around Europe?

DK: Not a thing.

JP: Well, my cousin lived in London, and Harold approached me one day, and he said, "Jean, do you still have family back there?"

And I said, "Yes," and told him I had family in London.

And he said, "Well," he said, "does she know quite a bit about London?"

I said, "Very much so." I said, "She works for the government."

And he said, "Well, would it be possible for you to get in touch with her and see if she could find a place for John and I to live?"

I said, "Well," I said, "I'll call my cousin, Mamie, and talk with her." We had a chat, and she said she would drive around and see different places. So, she got quite a big flat, as they called it, in London, very expensive, for them to live, and she met them both at the plane, and went with them to introduce them to the landlady.

Well, they kept the place while they went all around the world, and then John and Harold had a falling out. I think it was in Cairo. And John called my cousin to tell her that they were coming back and to have the landlady clean the place up. In the meantime, he wanted my cousin to show them around London. So, they went into London to get into the gambling places. When they got there, they were told, "No women are allowed."

And they said, "Do you have a membership, Mr. Smith?" They weren't going to let Harold in, at first.

And he said, "Well, I own Harolds Club in Reno," and he showed them his identification.

He said, "Well," he said, "I will allow you to come in, but," he said, "the gentleman and the lady will have to go somewhere else." So, Mamie went down to a little hotel, and they had a drink and waited for Harold to be escorted through London casinos.

When they came back to Reno, and John was packing up to go to California, he said, "Now, Jean, Mamie is coming to visit you this summer." He said, "I want you to call me in California, and I will pick you and Mamie up and show her around California." And he said, "Has Harold taken care of Mamie since he's been in Reno?"

I said, "He hasn't even acknowledged her presence." Never called her, never thanked her. I was really shocked, surprised.

DK: You used to gamble a lot, Louise. Did you ever go out gambling with Harold Sr.?

LJ: No.

DK: Did he ever gamble at your table?

LJ: Oh, yes.

DK: Did he gamble big money?

LJ: One time, I remember, he was up on the seventh floor that's when they were able to get markers and he'd say, "Give me a thousand, Sunshine." So you reached in and gave him a thousand dollars from your tray. This particular epi sode he lost, and he lost a lot. Well, the very next day, I was called into Pappy's office and told that if I *ever* dealt another hand to Harold Sr., I would be dismissed.

So, here we are. If he says, "Give me a thousand; deal to me," and you say no, then you're gone. If you do, Pappy's going to fire you. But he never, ever put me on the spot again.

DK: When you say he lost a lot of money, what was a lot of money?

LJ: Whew! Gosh, I can't even remem ber. Probably five or ten thousand. He lost a lot of money and plus the money that I gave him on markers.

DK: Did anyone keep track of the money you gave him?

LJ: No one kept track.

JP: Dorothy [Smith], Harold's first wife, would come up to my tray and say, "I need so much," and she would grab it.

And I said, "Dorothy, you can't take money out of my tray."

She said, "I can take money out of anybody's tray." And she wrote an IOU and signed her name and put it down in the box.

LJ: Oh, there's a little more to my story. Dale Roper was the boss, and after this episode, he came to me and said, "Louise, if Harold comes up to play, don't look for me, because I'll be in the men's room."

[group laughter]

DK: Did you ever deal to Harold Sr., Lucille?

LP: Yes, I dealt to him. It was downstairs in the back of the club, but I don't re member it being a huge amount of money, and I don't remember him win ning. All I remember is he said, "You're a very good dealer," and he didn't stay there long. So, that was it, but I did deal that one time. I probably did a one, two, three, good bye, you know. That was it. [laughter]

MR: I dealt to him just before they changed the rules, where he couldn't play in the club. And he never could win, but he always came back. And the last time he played with me, he said, "When I win from you, you won't even have a table left." [laughter] He was so mad, and he took it out on me for a long time. He was really, really mad at me.

RB: Last time I saw him gambling, he was playing one dollar a hand at the Ponderosa. He loved to play, and he didn't care if it was a dollar or whatever.

DW: Harold, when he lived at Harrah's Club, when they gave him his room over there, he used to come over to Harolds Club and play occasionally, and he'd always give the dealer, whomever he played with, a toke. He'd make one bet and give whatever it was. I'd meet him in the alley, and he'd hug me, and he'd say, "Dottie, they don't know how to run this place, do they? But we do, don't we?"

DK: That was after he sold the club?

DW: Oh, yes. It was when I was a floor supervisor. He would come and say, "We do, don't we? Why don't you tell them some of our stuff?" But he would come over, and he played with Mary Casey and some of the other dealers. He would make a bet for them and give it to them.

MV: Kind of sad, I thought.

JP: Harold would come out to the MGM, and he would play two or three dollars, just to be playing.

DW: Didn't he give you a toke, though?

JP: No, no, no. He was just about at the end of his line; it was just before he died. He would come out there and keep his head down. And then the last time I ever saw him, he finally came up and said, "Jean, I'm very proud of you," and shook hands and walked away. That was really sad.

DW: That's really sad.

RB: It was an end of an era when the Smiths passed away. A good era.

DK: We mentioned earlier that Pappy had stool pigeons, or people that went to him and told him things. Were there dealers or bosses that were considered "Pappy's girl" or "Harold's guy?"

PA: Well, Bessie Hoyt was Harold's girl. I don't mean his girl, per se, but, you know, she was pretty popular, the star of the place.

MV: She was the star.

DW: She's the only one that I know that ever got a full length mink coat.

PA: Yes.

DK: Harold bought Bessie Hoyt, a dealer, a full length mink coat?

RB: Well, that was her retirement present.

LJ: Well, what about Paula Kline? She was a stool pigeon.

DK: And she was a dealer and a floor manager.

RB: How about Ethel Blake? She was a floor person.

LJ: I don't think Ethel was a stool pigeon.

JP: She was pretty straight.

RB: Paula and Ethel were the only two women floor bosses there when I first came.

DK: If Paula, or anyone, was a stool pigeon, what benefits did they get? Did they get a cash payment?

LJ: Pappy offered me the job, a hundred a week to play with them and tell him what I saw. And I said, "Oh, I've never seen anything wrong."

And he said, "Well, you might."

And I said, "Oh, no, I don't think so. You have a lot of good dealers." Anyway, he pounded his fist on the table; he was quite annoyed. But his offer was a hundred a week extra.

DK: He wanted you to look for dealers that were cheating or giving help to players?

LJ: Right. Correct. Tell him everything. And I really could have used a hundred a week, believe me.

LP: I don't remember such a thing go ing on.

MV: I was going to say, now, I guess, I was green, because I never saw any body cheat.

LJ: I never did.

LP: I never looked. It wasn't my business.

RB: I was too busy dealing my own game.

DK: Did you ever hear anything like that, Margaret?

MR: Oh, yes, I heard rumors. There was always gossip. Whether it was true or not is something else.

LJ: Remember Tilly? She was a real nice girl, and I don't believe she would ever report anyone unfairly. She was a stoolie. She got extra money.

MR: I think all the Smiths had stoolies. Harold Jr. had his.

MV: He did?

MR: Oh, yes. I think they all had to, be cause they didn't know who to trust.

LP: I was unaware of all that stool pi geons.

RB: They probably saw plenty when I was dealing. I talked and yakked and visited.

LJ: They cared about the cheating, not friendliness. Paula finally did get fired, right, after Pappy died?

RB: Well, when you're a floor boss, shouldn't you report that kind of stuff? That's your job.

LP: I can understand old Marie. She walked around, and we all knew that she reported to Pappy. I thought the only kind of people that he had reporting to him were people like Marie that would come up to the table, sit down and play and see what was going on. I didn't know that he had insiders.

DW: Well, wasn't Marie Pappy's first wife?

MV: Marie? No, you're thinking of Dora.

DW: Well, Dora played all the time, too.

MV: She was probably a stoolie.

DW: Yes, she played the wheel.

DK: I remember a fellow on the dice table named Smokey, who hung around the club all the time, and he was just a customer, but he would supposedly re port to Senior if you could deal, or if you were making mistakes, or if you were cheating. Smokey was always on the dime table or the quarter table. As Rosalie was saying earlier, the floor boss's job was to fire people, if they saw some one cheating. I worked on Chuck Webster's shift most of the time, and if he found somebody cheating or doing something wrong, he didn't report it to anybody, he just terminated them.

RB: I thought Harolds Club policy was that if the eye in the sky reported some

thing, it had to be verified by two other people.

DK: Absolutely right.

RB: But it didn't have to be by a floor boss?

DK: Not necessarily.

RB: I thought that was a good policy. Then they couldn't gang up on you if they had a grudge against you. I thought that was fair, real fair.

DK: In those days, they didn't have cameras. Nowadays, you have a cam era, so if you video somebody cheating, you can let them go. But you're 100 per cent right. I never knew of anybody be ing terminated just because someone said something.

RB: Yes. They always had to have verifi cation by two other people.

DK: But I imagine if Pappy wanted to terminate somebody, who's going to stop him?

RB: Well, that's different. It was his club.

LJ: Or Harold.

RB: Or Harold, yes.

DW: But gaming changed so much over the years. When we worked there, there were a lot of crossroaders. And I'll say one thing for the Smith family, they taught us a lot, how to protect our games. Now they don't teach dealers anything. They don't need to, because now they have cameras. They rely on surveillance much more now.

JP: Dwayne, were you working at the club when the Sahati brothers used to gamble there?

DK: I dealt to Nick Sahati a lot, yes.

JP: Were you there the time the sailor punched Nick in the nose?

DK: No, I wasn't there when that hap pened.

JP: I was dealing the twenty one table right across from the dice table when that happened.

MR: Everybody liked Eddie, but no one liked Nick.

DK: I have a question for Dorothy. You started there in 1946, and you worked there until 1991?

DW: Yes. I only took time off to have my one baby, and Iola Smith, Pappy's wife, gave me the baby shower. The Smiths lived next to us, and George Smith, Pappy's son, used to play in my back yard all the time. George and my son got into a fist fight in school. I'll never forget this, because I thought, "Oh, boy, I'm going to be fired tomorrow," because my son beat the tar out of George.

And so, Pappy came down, and he said, "Well, I heard two kids had a fight, hmm?" Then he laughed like hell. He says, "Well, that'll teach them, won't it? Ha ha ha ha ha." And that was the end of it.

DK: Do you remember how much money you were making when you started there?

DW: Six dollars a day.

DK: What was the most money you ever made per day as a dealer?

DW: Twenty four dollars.

DK: So, your wages went from six dollars a day to twenty four dollars a day, and it took how many years to get there?

DW: About thirty years.

LP: We also worked two hours on and then got fifteen minutes off.

MV: If we were lucky, we worked only two hours. Sometimes I was on the table two hours and forty five minutes before I got a break.

DK: Was that commonplace in the industry, or was that just Harolds Club?

LP: Probably commonplace in the industry in those days. There were no women's rights.

DK: Did almost everyone work at least six days a week when it was busy?

RB: Yes, and overtime. If they needed you, you worked overtime, Saturday and Sunday. I worked six days and overtime.

DW: We got a raise when Harold sold to the Summa Corporation. But, you know, when they sold to the Summa Corporation, they brought in the Vegas people to run it, and the union got voted in. And then it disappeared. Then the Lincoln group came in. Phil Griffith was president, and Max Page was head of personnel. Then everything straightened out, and everything nice happened. They gave us more money, and they gave us retirement and vacations.

LJ: They took away the tips.

DW: They made you split your tips.

LJ: That was taking it away.

RB: That's the reason I quit.

DW: Well, I went on the floor.

RB: I quit Summa. I didn't ever quit Harolds. I wouldn't have quit, if they would have fired me. I'd have gone back, anyway. [laughter]

PA: The union didn't get in.

DW: It was voted in, because Mr. Weir came by my table and said, "You're happy now, aren't you?"

PA: Well, I thought it was a very close shave, and they didn't get in, and that's why, after that, things did get better, because of the threat of the union.

DW: No, it was voted in, but it never went into effect. I know Bill Weir came by my table, because I had made some fairly big tokes, and he sat back and watched me. He said to me, "You smile too much."

I said, "Well, that's the way I've been trained. You smile and greet customers."

"Well, you smile too much. You got to get hands out faster. That's all we care about. We don't care for smiles or personality." And that was the reason why the business and the club started downhill.

DK: Were you there, Marj, when the Smiths sold?

MV: Yes, I was one of the floor bosses' wives that got laid off.

DK: Would you tell us some of the things that happened after the club was sold that affected the personnel?

MV: I don't know many, because they got rid of us as fast as they could. They fired all the bosses' wives.

One of the first things they did was close Room 25, because there was no catwalk there. We had high limit tables in there, and they didn't trust us, because they were all crooks, and they thought we were crooks, too. And how dare they let us handle all that money with no cat walk above us! So, they closed those tables right away.

RB: We couldn't have any pockets or sweaters with pockets, and your apron had to be worn a certain way.

JP: No boots.

RB: Yes, they had a lot of new rules.

RB: But I quit because of tips. I went to the Riverside with Jessie Beck.

DK: What other changes were made? The tips were split, and the floor supervi sors' wives were terminated. Was there anything else they did?

PA: Well, they changed a lot of the bosses, too. They brought in their own. New bosses were brought in from Vegas.

DK: Were you working there when the club was sold, Lucille?

LP: Yes. I quit in 1972.

DK: So, you stayed there a year and a half or so after it was sold. How about you, Margaret? Were you working there when it was sold?

MR: Yes. I was released, too, with Marj and all the other bosses' wives. I was married to Clark Brown.

MV: I remember Faye Botorff (Faye's husband, Glen, was a boss) called me we were living out in Hidden Valley and she said in her sweet little baby voice, "Do you know what those dirty S.O.B.'s did?"

PA: [laughter]

MV: "They fired us!" And that's how I got the news I was fired.

[group laughter]

LP: They demoted Skip to a chip run ner. But, of course, they said that it was because he was drinking a little bit too much. And that was his problem. And from there, he didn't work at all.

DK: You stayed there quite a while af ter the club was sold, didn't you, Pat?

PA: Yes. I was there until 1980.

DK: How did you like working for them, compared to working for the Smiths?

PA: Oh, I just worked. All I worried about is whether they were going to make us share tips. [laughter] That was the big thing then.

DK: Well, they did make you share tips eventually, didn't they?

PA: Yes, yes.

RB: Right from the beginning.

LJ: Right from the get go.

LP: Well, you had to work for your tips. You sure couldn't work for your salary in those days and make ends meet.

RB: No, I was making a whole $17.50 a day in wages.

LP: I think, at the end, the floor bosses were making something like forty a day, so you know dealers weren't making much more than three dollars an hour.

DW: Well, that's twenty four, three times eight.

RB: I made $17.50 a day when I quit in 1971.

Note

1. The Smith family purchased a club called the Roaring Camp, which was known for its treasure trove of western memorabilia. They later moved the collection to Harolds Club and located the artifacts in an area of the club appropriately named the Roaring Camp Room.

19

Hired in the 1950s

Marjorie Voss, Cleo Della Quadri Chiatovich, Marcia Schwarz, Pauline Zahnd, Arline Johnston Harper, Yvonne "Todd" Davis, and Jim Wilbur.

Dwayne Kling[DK]: Let's start out with Cleo. Cleo, what year were you hired at Harolds Club?

Cleo Chiatovich[CC]: The twenty fifth of July in 1951.

DK: The people we talked to in the 1940s did not have to be interviewed or fill out applications to get hired. Did you have to?

CC: I wasn't interviewed, either.

DK: You weren't? How did you happen to get hired?

CC: I talked to Jessie Beck, and she said, "We aren't hiring now. It's too late in the season." And about a week later, Pappy called me and told me to come in. [laughter]

DK: Did you know Jessie or Pappy, previously?

CC: Neither one very well.

DK: Did you just happen to be in the club?

CC: No, they called me at home to come in. I had been in to talk to them, and they said at that time that they weren't hiring.

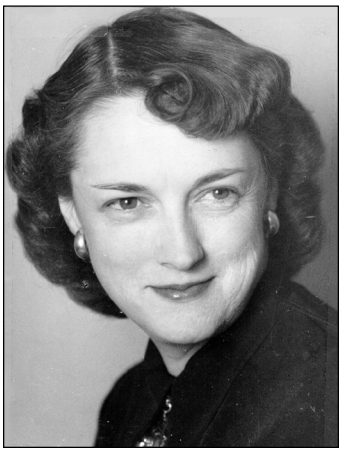
DK: But you had applied for a job?

CC: Yes.

DK: Was Jessie Beck working in personnel then, or was she a floor supervisor?

CC: She was in personnel.

DK: Did she work on the floor at all when you were there?



Cleo Chiatovich



Yvonne “Todd” Davis



Arline (Harper) Johnston



Marcia Schwarz



Jim Wilbur



Pauline Zahnd

CC: I don't recall that she did.

DK: Marcia, when were you hired?

Marcia Schwarz[MS]: I was hired in 1955 on July 4. I was interviewed by the personnel manager, Esther Marino. I don't recall filling out an application, at all. She said, "Well, the only person we're going to hire at this time is a dealer for the big wheel," and she said, "I don't think you'd be suited to do that."

I said, yes, I thought I would be able to, because I had worked in an amusement park back in Australia, and I thought I would be able to promote the game quite well.

She said, "Well, OK, come back." But I started at another club instead of starting there. When I went back in 1955, she said, "I hired you several years ago." [laughter] She remembered. Fantastic memory Esther Marino had.

DK: What was the big wheel they were talking about?

MS: It was the Big Six Wheel.

DK: Did you ever deal it?

MS: No, I didn't. I went on change first, and then I went on chuck a luck, and then they had a dealer work with me on an empty table to show me how to deal blackjack.

She showed me for an hour how to throw the cards, and she said, "Pay everybody's blackjack first," which I continued to do, whether I had one or not, for several weeks before I found out you didn't do it that way. [laughter] And from then on, I dealt twenty one and roulette.

DK: What limit table did you start dealing on?

MS: A twenty five cent table. I worked there for a number of months, and then I graduated to a fifty cent table, and then to a dollar table.

DK: When were you hired, Pauline?

Pauline Zahnd[PZ]: In the fall of 1955.

DK: Did you go in looking for a job?

PZ: Oh, no. I went to the bank to cash a check for my husband and then, instead of going home with the money, I stopped in Harolds Club, and I blew the whole thing.

[group laughter]

PZ: So then I went to Jim Hunter and said, "Please give me a job. At least I can go home and tell my husband, 'I'm sorry. I'll make up for it.'"

[group laughter]

PZ: So, he hired me, and to begin with, I was in the coffee shop making coffee. The coffee shop had just opened, and it didn't have a percolator to make a lot of coffee. So I had to make one pot of coffee at a time. So, that's what I did for a while, make a pot of coffee and take it from one station to the other, and I got a little tired of that. So one day, I asked Mr. Hunter, I said, "Please, could you transfer me to the casino? This is getting kind of tiresome."

He says, "Yes, I'm sure you can do better than this," so I was transferred to the casino.

DK: Had you ever played in Harolds Club before the day you lost all your money?

PZ: I don't think so.

DK: How did you happen to know to ask Mr. Hunter for a job?

PZ: Well, I asked to speak to the man ager. [laughter] And he was the man ager.

DK: How about you, Arline? How did you happen to get hired?

Arline Harper[AH]: My next door neigh bor already worked at the club, and she brought me downtown to be interviewed by Esther. Her name was Dori Singleton. She was my next door neighbor. I was fresh from New England, from Connecti cut, and I was scared to death to go to a casino all by myself, so she went with me. They took my application, and I'm not sure whether it was verbal or written. I waited about a month before they did call me. The Fourth of July passed, and I thought they weren't going to hire me. I was heartbroken. But then about a week after that, they did call.

DK: So, you really didn't get interviewed by anyone other than Esther Marino?

AH: Esther Marino, yes.

DK: What year did they call you?

AH: That was in July of 1952.

DK: What was your first job when they hired you?

AH: My first job was change. I worked change for seven months in the old Roar ing Camp room. And then I went to dice school. Believe it or not, they had a month long dice school in old Fort Smith, and there was a girl by the name of Isabel Maxwell who taught the dice class.

DK: Did you ask to learn dice?

AH: No, they picked me out because I was tall. They said I would work out on the crap table because of my height. I worked craps for twelve years before I learned twenty one.

DK: What year did you start, Todd?

Yvonne "Todd" Davis[YD]: 1954. Esther interviewed me, and I went to work the next day. I was on change two weeks, and I was tall, so they moved me to a crap table, which I didn't know from a bathtub. And I was terrified. Then I dealt the wonderful dime table.

DK: Tell us about the dime table.

YD: It was a nightmare. [laughter] What was it, Jim, that Pappy used to say about how much money it saved him to put us over there, because all the mistakes we made were with dimes instead of dollars?

James Wilbur[JW]: The best cheaters in the world played there.

YD: Almost everybody tried to cheat us. [laughter]

DK: Explain a little bit more about the dime table. What other kind of clientele did you have?

YD: Not the best.

PZ: I heard they were the experts of the game.

YD: Oh, the customers were. We weren't. Most of the dealers had no clue what was going on.

AH: I had a celebrity on the dime crap table. Joe Conforte was one of my first customers. Joe and I were born the same year, so we're the same age. He was just

starting out in his Mustang business. He wasn't too well known, but enough so I knew he was someone special.

DK: Was he pretty tough to deal to?

AH: He was easy to deal to. He didn't play the dimes, but he played the dime crap table. He played dollars.

DK: Oh, he did? Todd, did you ever deal to Mr. Conforte?

YD: Yes. That was one of the most em barrassing things that ever happened to me on a crap table. I did not know who he was, and I thought he was peculiar, because he had his money behind him, and then he had a separate rack of money in front of him.

And I thought, "Well, that's strange," but, you know, people are that way. So, he played about an hour, and I noticed the bosses sort of standing on the outside, so I figured he had to be some body. He gets through playing, and he cashes out. He took the one pile of money, and I cashed that out for him.

And then he took all the rest of his money, which was more than he cashed out, and said, "Here, Todd," he says, "these were all the mistakes you made." So, he wasn't my favorite person.

DK: Was he playing dollars when you dealt to him?

YD: Yes, a little bit of everything.

AH: At that time, we didn't have dime chips. We had dimes and quarters and nickels.

YD: We didn't even have changers.

AH: Yes, we took the coins out of the rack.

DK: Did you have quite a few regular customers on the dime table, people that were there every day?

YD: Yes.

AH: The alley crowd. I didn't know their names.

YD: I remember some of them. It was the same group.

DK: The same group was there for years, probably. And they were local alley people. Today they'd probably be called homeless people, right?

AH: Right.

YD: I think these people all lived in cheap hotel rooms. And they'd never really . . . once in a while, they'd cause trouble, but we didn't really have any problems.

JW: They were the club's first players when it opened, and the Smiths were always loyal to those people, because they were the only customers they had in the early days.

MS: But they would throw a tantrum once in a while.

JW: Oh, yes.

MS: Some of those older people would get angry. I know one tore cards up and threw them at me. [laughter] Money, too! Some went down the back of my blouse, and I said, "No way!"

DK: They were only betting dimes or quarters, but that was a lot of money to them.

MS: Sure, yes. I understand that.

DK: Jim, when did you start in Harolds Club?

JW: April of 1950.

DK: So, how did you happen to get hired? Did you go in looking for a job?

JW: No. When I first came to Reno, I was involved in a minor way with Western painting. I was working with another art ist who was here at the time, that had done a lot of big pictures for the Bank Club and the Frontier Club. I got to know him through the doctor that he had gone to, and I was also doing things on my own. I had done a charcoal portrait of Wilbur May's horse, and it was pretty good size. I had it on display at the old Creewood Gift Shop, which was down where the Hughes Porter Building was.

At that time, Harold was very much interested in horses, and he even rode in the rodeo parade. His wife, Lois, saw this portrait in the Creewood Gift Shop, and so she called me and wanted me to do a portrait of Harold on the big palomino horse that he had at that time. And so, I followed up with that, because there wasn't too much art work at that time. I went out there, and I saw the horse and made all the necessary sketches for start ing the project. We were living in a little bungalow type of house up on Fifth Street, and I had the front room as a stu dio, and it took me quite a while to do that painting.

DK: Where was Harold living then?

JW: On Lakeside and Moana. It's all gone now. There's a gas station there now. I think that was the first one they moved into when Lois and he were mar ried.

Anyway, I worked on the picture for quite a while, and, of course, I had to take another job in the mornings. I did most of the work on the artwork in the evening. It did take me a long time, and it was in early 1950 that I completed the painting, and as a result, they took Sue, my wife, and me out to dinner at the Mapes in the Sky Room.

When we got through with dinner, Harold said, "They don't have very good meals here, and they don't have good floor shows. The only place that they have good floor shows is in Las Vegas." He said, "Would you like to go to Las Ve gas?" Well, we didn't have any children at that time, so here it is about one o'clock in the morning, and we went home, got some clothing, and about an hour later, he comes by and picks us up, and we head to Las Vegas. He was go ing to take us down to show us the floor shows.

When we got into Las Vegas, it was *early* morning, and he came to the room, and he says, "I want you people to un derstand that you are my guests," and he was very amiable and very courte ous. Sue had known the whole Smith fam ily since they first came to Reno, because her stepfather, a doctor, was the doctor for Pappy Smith. And so, through that, she had known them, but not intimately, and not in a social way.

We went out to dinner that night, had some drinks, and the following night, we went to another casino. We figured we were going to be gone just one day or two days. So, after the third casino, he said he wants to go into Hollywood. We get in the car, and we go into Hollywood, and we check into some place. I can't remember what it was. Now he wants to go to all the places down there that were familiar, like the Brown Derby and all the rest. So, here we go with another night at that place. So, this is about five days.

After we finish that up, then he wants to go to the ocean. He wants to

see the ocean, so we drive on out to the ocean and check into a motel, and he wants to walk on the beach. We're there one more night. Now, this is about six days. Then he wants to head up to San Francisco, and we went up the old High way 1, and I was driving. We got into San Francisco and stayed at the Sir Francis Drake.

During the trip, he had asked Sue if I would be interested in coming to work at the club. Well, there wasn't much work at that time in art. When we finished up in San Francisco, we finally got back into Reno about ten days later. Well, evi dently, he had planned for me to come down to have somebody interview me, because about a week after we were home, I get this phone call from Jessie Beck she was a secretary to the Smith's at that time. So, I go down there, and I didn't have to fill out an application, just had to make out whatever was neces sary to go to work. So, that's how I started working at Harolds Club. And my first job was as a change apron at eight dollars a day.

MS: [laughter]

JW: And then things sort of progressed, and I became a student dealer and went on swing shift, where I had one of the old time dealers, Emily Ritterscamp, teach me twenty one. She was a little, short gal with big, dark eyes, and she leaned across the table, and she says, "Well, do you know anything about twenty one?"

I said, "No, but I think I can add."

And she says, "Well, that's very im portant."

[group laughter]

JW: Then they sent me over to learn dice, and that was with Bill Hogan and Herb Ritterscamp. Herb was a floor man at that time. Bill Hogan was a dice dealer, so I learned dice from them. So, I was dealing twenty one and dice on the two o'clock in the afternoon to ten o'clock at night shift. I was sort of like a relief dealer on both games. I did that for about a year and a half, and then I was promoted to floor boss.

YD: I wonder why Jim was hired in 1950, and I was hired in 1954, and he made eight dollars a day, and I started at six.

AH: I started at eleven, and I started in 1952.

MS: I started at eight.

YD: Well, maybe they just didn't like me, I don't know.

DK: Did any of you people come to Reno or come to Harolds Club with the idea of making gambling your career?

JW: No.

YD: No.

MS: No, I was on my way to Canada.

DK: It was just a part time job for every one, or temporary job, and one thing led to another?

CC: It helped put some through college.

MS: Yes.

DK: Cleo, your first husband, I believe, was a famous orchestra leader, Della Quadri.

CC: Yes.

DK: Did you ever sing with the band?

CC: No, unfortunately. [laughter] He played with the Glen Miller Band and quite a few of the big orchestras, and then he settled in Reno, eventually.

DK: What were some of the clubs that he played in? Do you recall?

CC: Every place in town, practically. The Riverside and Mapes and all those places.

PZ: He played at Eugene's, and he used to play at the El Patio Ballroom.

DK: When he was playing in the clubs, were you working?

CC: Yes, I was working.

DK: Was your first job in Reno at Harolds?

CC: Yes. It was my only job until Jessie Beck opened the Riverside.

DK: Jim, Jessie Beck wasn't on the floor when you went to work?

JW: No, she was a secretary up there at Fort Smith.

DK: Wasn't working in keno at all?

JW: No, Fred Beck ran the keno, and his wife's name was Ruth Beck. That was before Jessie even got in the picture.

DK: So, after Fred Beck died, did she take over the keno game?

JW: Well, some time after that, yes.

DK: Marcia, when you started there, who were some of the shift managers and floor managers?

MS: Of course, Chuck Webster was there and Jack Shaver and Joe Speicher. Of course, Joe Devers, and there was Norman Maushardt, George Wilson, Harry Burke, Clark Brown, Dale Roper, Tom Davis, Glen Botorff, and, of course, Darl Voss.

DK: Arline, do you remember your start ing pay?

AH: It seems to me like I was started at eleven a day, but I can't be positive.

DK: Did you rely mainly on your wages, or on your tips, when you were working there, Pauline?

PZ: I relied on my husband!

DK: Oh, you relied on your husband.

[group laughter]

PZ: Yes, I was married.

DK: But were your tips more than your wages?

PZ: Oh, no. No, not in my case, no. I never did make big tips like most of the girls did, and I have to be truthful. I never did like dealing.

DK: Nothing wrong with saying that.

PZ: It bothered me. If I took the people's money, I was unhappy about that. If I lost the house's money, I was unhappy about that. I hate to admit it, but I was not happy with what I was doing. And I did it for twenty years.

Marjorie Voss[MV]: I actually beat a little, old man on roulette one time so badly that, as I cleared the board, my tears

were dropping on the table. That's the truth.

CC: I was working the graveyard shift on roulette, and a very nice looking, young man and his mother came in and sat down and played roulette. He asked me the basic way of playing, and I told him what I knew about it. He played the same number time after time after time after time. And I couldn't hit it. And finally, I was trying to hit it. I didn't usually try to help people, but he was getting a little bit angry. He thought I was cheating him. And I was hoping that I would hit the darn number. Never did. He played all night long, and I never did hit his number.

DK: Arline and Todd, you both dealt dice and twenty one. How were the tips on the dice table compared to the tips on twenty one?

AH: They didn't compare.

YD: Oh, no, not at all.

AH: Much better on twenty one.

YD: Twenty one was *much* better.

DK: So, how did you get off of the dice table, Todd?

YD: I asked Pappy. It finally dawned on me I was so bright, you know, after all those years that they were making more money than I was. [laughter]

AH: Working twice as hard, and making half as much money. [laughter]

YD: Right. So I came down on my own time, like, around ten o'clock at night, and dealers helped me learn to deal. I didn't know anything about twenty one. Nothing. But as far as money went, it was great.

DK: Wasn't it easy to learn twenty one, after having dealt dice?

YD: I knew nothing about the game, I mean, absolutely nothing. It's like when I went on the crap table, I knew nothing. In fact, I can remember Chuck Webster, when I was dealing dice, sent me upstairs to . . . they had a meeting, and they wanted dealers, so many at a time, to go downstairs for the meeting. So, he sent me upstairs to break the high limit table twenty one game. I kept trying to say, "Chuck, I don't know how to deal it!" And he didn't believe me, and he sent me up there.

And Clark Brown was on the sev enth floor, and I said, "I don't deal this game!"

And he says, "Todd, get in there." So, I went in, and he took one look, and he said, "You're not kidding," he says, "Go downstairs."
[group laughter]

MS: They did that to me on roulette. The dealer on the third floor had to leave, and they said, "It never gets busy up here." And to that point, I was just rack ing checks; I had never dealt. And so, the dealer left, and then it got busy. They were bringing in money, because I was giving it out. I don't know whether I was doing it right or what. [laughter] But any how, you know, the payoffs, they're a little tricky. And I know I didn't know them all, so it was kind of rough, but then I just had to get to it and do it the best I could. I kept the pay off card there, and I kept looking up the payoffs.

AH: In those days, they had, maybe, two floor bosses for the whole second

floor and two for the whole first floor. Now they have one for every four or six games.

DK: The third floor didn't even have a floor manager.

JW: I was going to say, when I got on the dime table, we had two gal dealers there. The one that was kind of helping me on the dime table was Betty Barlow. I can remember very well when I was dealing with her, if I'd start to make a payoff, and she was on the other end with a stick, and I started to come out with too much money, she'd rap me on the knuckles with the stick. [laughter]

DK: Didn't she teach a lot of dice deal ers?

JW: Yes, she taught a lot of dealers in Room 25.

DK: How did you get off of dice table, Arline?

AH: I got pregnant. That's when I learned twenty one.

MS: Did you drink that concoction that Pappy Smith put in the rec room for the girls that wanted to get pregnant? Do you remember the beverage he made up? He had the coffee lady make it up. I think there was one girl that got preg nant. She drank it faithfully. [laughter] I think it was vinegar and lemon juice and honey.

JW: It was honey and vinegar.

DK: Honey and vinegar. That was his cure for everything, wasn't it?

JW: That's right.

PZ: I did that to lose weight. Didn't help.

DK: What did you drink it for, Cleo?

CC: I didn't.

MS: I didn't, either. [laughter]

DK: Did you drink it, Jim?

JW: I only tried it one time, but I didn't have any interest in it.

DK: Todd, did you ever try it?

YD: No!

AH: Oh, I tried it.

JW: That was an old, New England recipe that he had.

DK: And he had that right there in the break room, in the rec room.

MV: He also passed out all those folk medicine books.

DK: How many of you worked at the Gun Club? I know Marcia worked at the Gun Club.

MS: Yes, I did.

DK: Did any of you other people work there?

AH: I worked there twice.

DK: You worked there twice? And Jim worked there, I know. Tell us a little bit about where the Gun Club was located, and did they have gambling there?

MS: It was out on the Pyramid Lake High way. And they had, I would say, about six or seven twenty one tables and a crap

table. And the shooters would gamble in between going out and shooting.

DK: Were the tables open every day of the year?

MS: No. This would only be when a shoot was in progress. There were three major shoots during the year.

DK: Did you shoot out there, as well as deal?

MS: Well, I dealt out there first. To tell you the truth, back in 1947, I was a scorer out there. I was just working part time during the shoots. And then when I started work ing at Harolds Club, they asked me to go out and work at the shoots, which I did. And the Winchester man and the Remington man and the Eclipse target man were all out there watching me deal one time, and they said, "Well, your re flexes are pretty good. We'll take you out there and see how you do shooting." And they took me out on one of my breaks, and I think I shot at five targets. Hit one with my eyes closed, I think. [laughter] So, they said, "Well, you did fine." So, I started going out and prac ticing after that, and then I took it up se riously and joined the ADA and the PRTA.

DK: Did you work out there as a boss, Jim, or as a dealer?

JW: Always as a boss. In 1957, I was told that I was going out to the Gun Club to run the gaming out there. We used to have to load up the automobile we had an old dilapidated automobile at that time and we'd load it up from the vault. We'd park it in the alley and then load it up and bring all the trays and the money, whatever was necessary, includ ing the bank roll that I had at the podium for cash outs. And so, we'd go out, and at the time, one man came with me kind of like a shotgun rider, if you want to use that word old Jim Simpson that worked there.

He'd come out and kind of over see everything, as far as any security. But we didn't have many problems at that time. The Gun Club would only stay open during the shoots, but it never shut down until the people got through playing. Well, of course, there wasn't much en tertainment downtown at that time any where, so they'd just stay and gamble. There would be a lot of times we would be there at one o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock in the morning; and one time I stayed all night long.

Anyway, when we'd finish up, we'd usually stay and have something to eat. And then we'd load up the car with all the money out of the box, clean up the boxes, take all the trays, put it all back in the car, and head down to the vault and check everything in. And then if it was necessary, we'd come back at seven o'clock the next morning and load up again. And later on, as the years passed, they had another car, a big old Cadillac. I used that for a few times, and then that wasn't always available, and I ended up using my own car. I had a big Cadillac at that time, and it had a lot of room, so we'd do the same routine. We'd load up at seven in the morning and just stay there until whatever time it closed. And it was always that way during the shoots.

MS: You didn't get much sleep during a shoot.

JW: No.

DK: Do you recall roughly how much money you took out to one of those shoots in that old car, as far as currency and chips?

JW: Well, I remember the standard bank roll was fifty thousand dollars in cash that we used on the desk. And then we had the big chips, I think they were close to $100,000.

MS: Used to have some good gamblers out there.

JW: Yes.

DK: What kind of limits did they deal out there?

JW: Well, it was normal, in a sense. I think it was five hundred dollars.

MS: Five hundred was the max.

JW: Yes. And we had a roulette wheel, and a lot of slot machines. The slot ma chine department from the club took care of that. A lot of the women that came for the shoot would be interested in playing on the slot machines.

DK: Did you ever shoot out there, Todd?

YD: Yes. But I never worked there.

DK: Who were some of the better shoot ers in the Reno area or in Harolds Club?

YD: Joe Devers, Dan Orlich, Evelyn Primm, Raymond A. Smith, and even Olga Smith, Raymond's wife.

DK: Did Harold Smith Sr. shoot?

YD: Yes. All the time.

DK: Whose baby was that gun club? Was it Pappy's or Senior's?

JW: Senior's, I'd say.

MS: Well, actually, Senior. Yes, I guess it was, but it was going strong when Pappy was alive.

AH: Jim Hunter shot there, too, didn't he?

MS: He used to go out there as a man ager.

JW: He was in charge. I took the place of Jim Hunter when they took him off the floor.

YD: Gloria Mapes was shooting then, and Charlie Mapes was shooting. We had the best shots in the world right here.

YD: Joe Devers was the top all around shooter in the world.

DK: Was Joe Devers better than Dan Orlich?

MS: He was a natural.

YD: Dan used to say that Joe Devers was a better shooter than he was.

MS: Yes, he was a real natural shooter, whereas Dan had to practice for a long time and worked at it. But he was a ter rific shooter, too. I mean, it was nothing for these guys to shoot two hundred straight targets in the singles or a hundred straight in handicap.

DK: Arline, did you deal dice or twenty one at the Gun Club?

AH: Yes, one time. They needed to open an extra table, so they sent Bob Hunter and I out to deal dice. Bob Hunter and I dealt a lot together.

PZ: I didn't deal there, but that's where we used to have our Christmas party.

MS: Yes, we had our Christmas party out there.

PZ: Yes, and the party went on for twenty four hours.

MS: And a terrific buffet and all the li quor you wanted to drink, music, danc ing, everything. And the Smiths used to send Christmas dinners to the orphans in Carson City. And anybody could go down there. I know I took my children down there on Christmas day. I wanted them to see that there were children worse off than they were.

MV: For years Harold took up a collec tion for Christmas presents for all the kids at the orphanage. For years he did that.

DK: And didn't the club have a fellow they sent to the orphanage as Santa Claus?

MS: Yes, Jim Murdock.

AH: He did that for years.

DK: Jim, tell us about an early Christmas party held at the El Patio Ballroom.

JW: Yes. That would have been way be fore I started working at Harolds, about 1947. I remember that they had up in the ceiling a mass of balloons, and at a cer tain time, they'd let the balloons down. Most of them, if not all of the balloons, had either five dollar bills, ten dollar bills, or twenty dollar bills in them. And when they came down, everybody was scat tering around trying to get the money.

MS: There wasn't any liquor served in there.

JW: Oh, I don't remember that.

MS: No, I don't remember any liquor in there, at all.

JW: I was only there as a guest, and I don't remember too much about it. It was located at the corner of Arlington and Commercial Row.

DK: In 1954, there were beautiful col ored portraits of a lot of the girl dealers hanging on the wall. Did any of you people have your picture on that wall? Arline?

AH: Yes, we had on Western wear, and we all wore cowboy hats.

DK: How were you chosen to have your picture taken?

AH: They chose everybody. All the deal ers, as far as I know.

MS: Pappy would offer it to you, and it was up to you whether you wanted to do it or not. It was never mandatory to have it done or anything like that. It was just an option you had if you wanted your picture up, you got it up.

DK: What do you remember about the pictures, Cleo?

CC: The same thing. They were pretty good pictures, and they had them on the second and third floor, everywhere.

DK: Yes, I remember a lot on the first floor. Pauline, did you ever dance with Pappy at the club?

PZ: Oh, yes. Many, many, many times. He had a dance floor in his office. One day when we needed money and I al

ways needed money, because I was gambling all the time, and I wanted to hide it from my husband I go up and ask Pappy if I could borrow some money. I needed a few hundred dollars, and, of course, he said, "Yes." And he phoned whoever was in charge and had them make out a check for that amount. So, as I was waiting for it in his office, he said, "Do you like to dance, dear?"

I said, "Yes, I enjoy dancing." So, I waltzed to "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." I don't know how many times I waltzed to that number, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

JW: [laughter]

PZ: His dance floor was about eight by ten, and one day he told me that the reason he danced up there was be cause his doctor told him that he had to exercise his legs. So he said, "Rather than walking up and down the street by my self, I prefer to dance with a pretty girl." So, that's how he got his exercise, by dancing.

DK: Did he have a record player there?

PZ: Oh, yes. A few records, yes.

DK: Did you become a regular dancer? Did he call you up to his office on a regu lar basis?

PZ: Many times, yes.

AH: Cocktail girls would bring coffee or drinks up there, and he'd end up danc ing with them, too. [laughter]

DK: Did you ever dance with him, Arline?

AH: No, I never did, but I did hear about it from Betty Elliot. She was a cocktail wait ress, and she used to tell me about it, "Bring coffee, and be prepared to dance."

DK: Did you ever dance with him, Cleo?

CC: Once.

DK: Where, in his office?

CC: I just happened to be up there, and he says, "Come and dance with me." But Pauline was too good. He liked to dance with Pauline.

PZ: But, I didn't like it after a time, be cause I was under the impression that some employees were thinking there was something going on between me and Pappy. It went on day in and day out for a long time.

DK: Were you working your regular shift?

PZ: Yes, they would take me off the table, and I'd go up and dance.

AH: I hope he tipped you, because you were losing money.

PZ: No, he never gave me money.

AH: [laughter] I was kidding when I said that.

PZ: No, that's true. Many times I used to think, "You know, while I'm dancing up here, I'm not making any money," which was true.

DK: What were you going to say, Marcia?

MS: I said Harolds Club had a very ca sual atmosphere. And very relaxing. There was never any pressure, at all.

DK: Did you ever work in any other club in town?

MS: Yes, I worked at Harrah's. I was the first woman bingo agent there. I started out on change, and then I went to cashiering. But then Bob Ring said, "We've never had women in bingo," and he said, "I would like you to try it out." So I went in to be a bingo agent. Then I quit and went over to Harolds Club.

DK: So, you never dealt in Harrah's?

MS: No, I never dealt twenty one. Bob Ring was the one that asked me to go into the bingo. He was a very nice man, very nice. And it was fun. I enjoyed it.

DK: Could you compare working at Harrah's with working at Harolds?

MS: Well, working at Harrah's was a little more formal, a little more sophisticated. It wasn't just so family or friendly, although the employees were friendly.

DK: They had stricter procedures, per haps?

MS: Yes. And it was more business like, where it was more family like over at Harolds Club. But, of course, it was a dif ferent atmosphere, too. Harolds Club had a really Western style. We used to get all the people going hunting. They would be on their way to Elko, and they'd stop by Reno to gamble a little bit. We used to tease them about, "What are you looking for? Two legged or four legged deer?" [laughter] We had a lot of those type of people.

DK: Where was it more fun to work?

MS: Oh, Harolds Club was more fun. I en joyed it thoroughly there. And I enjoyed working and dealing all the time I was in it, except at the beginning I was a very nervous dealer. But Pappy Smith, as I said, put these positive thinking books out, and I practiced for six weeks, smiling in the mirror and greeting somebody. Then the first player that came up, I said, "Good morning, sir."

He slammed his money down, and he says, "Shut up and deal."

JW: [laughter]

MS: Well, that blew my mind. [laughter] Then I got to thinking, "Well, no, he's not going to do this to me." So, from then on, I just kept the practice up. And I learned to enjoy the people. And they would talk to me. And I didn't make a lot of tokes or anything like that, but I made a lot of friends. And they were really nice, and they'd come back and come back and play.

DK: That was a big thing, the repeat business.

MS: Yes, the repeat business was a big thing. As a matter of fact, after Harold sold the place, I had this guy walk up to my table I was still working at Harolds Club and he said, "Could you tell me where Marcia Schwarz is?"

And I said, "Well, I'm Marcia Schwarz." He had been there twenty five years prior, and he had enjoyed himself so much in there. And he went back to Tennessee where he was from, and he wrote this article in the paper, sent me a copy of it.

DK: That's a real compliment.

MS: I used to have people that knew I was originally from Australia, and they would maybe have had family in En gland. They'd bring me boxes of English

tea, and they'd make little craft things and bring them to me and other things like that. So, I really did meet a lot of wonderful people, and I enjoyed the work. It was like having a party every day. I got more laughs there than I got at home.

DK: What were you going to say, Cleo?

CC: Well, remember, Pappy always en couraged us to smile and be friendly, and one day many years ago, we went to work, and all of a sudden everybody come around and told us not to talk to the customers. And I had a couple down from Seattle, and she come rushing up to the table, "Hi, Cleo, how are you this morning?"

I said, "Can't talk."

And she said, "What?"

I says, "Can't talk."

She says, "You've got a sore throat?"

I said, "No, can't talk."

And she said, "What do you mean you can't talk?"

I said, "We have a new rule. We can't talk to the customers."

"Well, I'll go over to Harrah's," and she just walked right around. She says, "We'll come and take you to dinner to night." That didn't last very long.

DK: Are you talking about when Howard Hughes took over?

CC: It was a little before that.

MS: I remember there was a period there where we weren't supposed to talk.

DK: Who told you to stop talking?

MS: I think it was Harold Smith.

AH: They were trying to get us ready for the Las Vegas people taking over when that happened, because then we had to learn to deal two handed.

MS: Because I can remember telling somebody I couldn't talk.

MV: I remember you couldn't visit with your customers, because Harold took me off the table once, because I was visit ing with a customer who had just lost six hundred dollars. She was sitting at my table visiting, and he came in, caught us, and told me to take a break, and then I could visit with this lady all I wanted.

YD: I don't remember that. I never quit talking. [laughter]

MV: He told us we could not visit with our customers. He was in one of his moods. It lasted for a while.

MS: Yes, he would get into those moods, and then in a few days, he would get out of them.

DK: Todd, did you work other places af ter Harolds Club?

YD: Yes. The Holiday and the Pioneer. I dealt at the Holiday Inn, and I dealt at the Pioneer for about a year before I went on the floor.

DK: Why and when did you leave Harolds Club?

MV: Weren't you fired with the rest of us?

YD: Yes, I was fired with the rest of them.

DK: Explain what "fired with the rest of them" means.

YD: The Hughes people fired all of the floor bosses' wives that worked there. Actually, now we could probably sue them with a class action suit, but in those days if you wanted to work in this business, you didn't dare sue anybody. I mean, you'd get your husband in trouble and yourself in trouble. The Hughes people fired all of the floor men's wives about six months after they took over, because they believed there were things going on that they didn't like. And this was a quote, "Anybody worked in the place over a year was stealing." And how many years had we worked there? I heard one of the Hughes people say that myself, so that wasn't just gossip. They really believed that.

MS: It was not unusual to have them actually breathing all the way down your neck.

DK: They were that close to you?

MS: They were that close. Lowell Bletcher used to stand right here. And what was the other guy, the one that stood right next to you? Billy Weir.

YD: My favorite person.

MS: Billy Weir used to stand right here. Bletcher would get real upset if I got real friendly with everybody on the table. He'd say, "You can't do that." I'd go ahead and do it, anyhow. But he wasn't too bad a guy, turned out to be all right. But who was the other one you mentioned? Billy Weir.

AH: Billy Weir.

MS: He was the one that used to really breath down your neck and listen to everything you said. But I was never doing anything wrong, so they couldn't catch me or fire me. I knew what they were after.

DK: So, they suspected collusion as far as the floor managers and their wives, or favoritism?

MS: Yes, yes. And with the players, they thought that, too. You know, if you were real friendly with the players, they thought that you had something going dishonest.

YD: Well, that was the Las Vegas way. And it really wasn't their fault any more than it was ours. They got at Harolds Club, truthfully, especially by me, lot of passive resistance, too. We just sort of shined them on. I know I did it.

DK: So, when you left Harolds Club, Todd, you went to work at the Holiday?

YD: Yes. Let's see, that's when Al Ferrari bought it, and I worked there for a couple of years. Then I quit and went over to the Pioneer.

DK: Were there any outstanding differences between Harolds Club and the Holiday and the Pioneer?

YD: Well, the most outstanding difference to me was it was a split store at the Holiday, and I'd never done that before. I'd rather go for my own.

DK: A split store is when the dealers split their tokes?

YD: Yes, all the money goes into the same pot, and then they split it up at the end of the shift. You still make tokes, but you always get some people in a split store that don't talk. They're not nice to anybody, because they figure that

Marcia or somebody is going to take care of them, because she has a good personality and is making a lot of money. But I would rather depend on myself than I would on other people.

MS: Actually, sometimes I didn't make hardly anything, because I was too friendly. I mean, they just liked to play. I'd have one come by and say, "Here, I'd like to play with you," and they'd lose at my table, and they'd go somewhere else and win and come by and throw me a couple of bucks and say, "Here. I won over there. I'm sorry I couldn't play with you." [laughter]

DK: Did you go to work at the Riverside, Pauline?

PZ: No, I never worked anywhere but Harolds.

DK: When did you leave Harolds Club?

PZ: In 1975 in the spring. One day I went on a break, and then I came back from my break. It was on a Saturday. I think it was a dirty thing to do, but I looked around, and I looked at my table, looked at the people, and said, "I'm going home."

And the floor boss said to me, he says, "You know, Pauline, if you do that, you can't ever come back."

I said, "That suits me fine. I don't want to ever come back." I went to work, and then at noon, I decided enough was enough.

DK: Arline, how about you? How long did you stay at Harolds Club?

AH: From 1952 to 1974. I left in 1974 to move to Utah. I got married again, stayed there for two years, and came back.

DK: Did you ever work in the casinos again?

AH: Yes, I tried to get back at Harolds Club, but it was right at Labor Day, and they weren't hiring at all, so I went to the Shy Clown, which is now Baldini's, and was there for almost four years. And then I went to MGM and stayed there for ten years. I retired from Bally's. Bally's bought MGM. And then, after I left, the Hilton took over; it's now the Hilton.

DK: Were you supervisor there?

AH: I was a dealer. All my years I dealt.

DK: Harolds Club didn't open their res taurant till 1955. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, where did you go to eat on your breaks? Did you go to the Wine House?

AH: The Reno Turf Club or the drugstore.

YD: The Palace Club.

DK: Where did you go, Jim?

JW: Right across the alley to the Reno Turf Club.

AH: In those early days, we had a forty minute break to eat. We didn't have the half hours like they do now; we had a forty minute break, so you could eat with out being rushed. Yes.

DK: Did you go across the alley, too, Pauline?

PZ: No, the restaurant was already open when I started there. I made cof fee.

DK: Oh. Oh, that's right. [laughter] How about you, Cleo?

CC: I enjoyed the desserts at the Nevada Club. I went over there and bought pie.

DK: They were famous for their pies.

MS: Yes, and Harolds got very famous for their cakes.

MV: They made beautiful cakes.

MS: They used to have people come up and buy quite a few at the same time to take back to California.

DK: I know Pauline said that she gambled a lot. Could you gamble on your breaks at Harolds Club?

PZ: Oh, yes. They encouraged it. Sure. I'd have a couple of dollars. I'd come out from behind the table, I'd plunk it on the table, and then I'd lose it. I couldn't hang onto a dollar.

DK: Did you ever get so lucky that you were late getting back on your breaks?

PZ: Oh, no. I could have gotten very wealthy if I had listened to what two of my customers told me. There was one man that played with me, and he said, before he left, "You should invest in Sealy mattress."

I said, "Oh, yes?"

He said, "Yes, there will be hotels opening from coast to coast, and Sealy will be providing all of the mattresses." So, I went home, and I told my husband, and he didn't pay attention to me.

And then another time, a young man told me, he says, "You know, you should invest in Texas Instruments." In those days, the computer was a whole new world. He said, "Before long, you'll be able to put a computer in your pocket." So, I went home all thrilled about it, because Walter, you know, he liked to invest money, but because it was me that said it, it had to be bad. So, he wouldn't pay attention to that, either. So, if he had listened to my customers, that would have been pretty nice.

DK: I'll ask you this, Cleo. Were African Americans allowed to play in Harolds or in any of the other clubs?

CC: I had dealt on the table by the front bar for a long time, and we hadn't had any colored people. Then one night about 1965, this colored man came in and sat down. He sat there, and he sat there, and he was determined to sit there until somebody made him move. They never did let him play, but he sat there practically all night long and kept looking around.

MS: But we had some work there. Leroy Badie was on the floor.

DK: Well, let's go back a little bit further, let's say, back into the early 1950s. Jim, do you recall them coming in the club?

JW: Yes, but not very many. And when we were on the floor, if a colored group came in, we had to have them escorted out. We would sit them down in the office, and explain to them that we would appreciate it if they didn't play in the club, and we suggested that they go down to Bill Fong's New China Club on Lake Street.

The only one that *I* remember that was allowed to play in the club was a sergeant from the Stead Air Force Base. He would be in uniform, and he was allowed to play all the time. He usually played on dice. And the only reason he was allowed to play was that Pappy conceded to respect of the uniform. And he

had the uniform on all the time, and he was allowed to play because of that. Pappy would not put him out, because he was in the military. Well, Pappy never got involved in that too much. I think it was Harold that kind of enforced that about colored people in the club.

DK: Were they allowed in any of the clubs at that time? What do you say, Todd?

YD: I don't think so. I think they were all down at the Cosmo Club or the New China Club.

MS: Down on Lake Street.

MV: They were not allowed in the Riverside, because the Mills brothers entertained there, and they weren't even allowed to sleep there.

YD: Cab Calloway was allowed to play in Harolds Club. Do you remember that, Jim?

MV: I remember he played on the back table.

YD: He caused so much trouble and was so loud and argumentative that they finally decided it was all right. He wasn't here that often, anyway, but when he was here, he was allowed to play.

DK: He entertained at the Golden, I think.

JW: Later on, I remember Louie Armstrong playing twenty one on the seventh floor, but that was quite a while after they started those floor shows.

DK: Much later. But do you recall ever asking anyone to leave, Arline?

AH: I was told when I went on change, selling change, that if a colored person played by the door, I would not say anything to them. But if they came in the club, then I should say something to them. But as long as they were by the door, it was all right. I never had a problem.

DK: How about you, Pauline?

PZ: I dealt to a colored man once. I had a dead table; he sat at my table. And, you know, in Canada, they can go anywhere they want to, and I wasn't aware that he couldn't do that here in the States. So, I dealt to him, and then the girl that was dealing the table next to me, she buzzed for the floor boss, and then they came and talked to him, and he left.

MV: What year was that?

PZ: Oh, must have been 1957.

YD: I think one of the most embarrassing things I ever saw in my life happened after the Civil Rights Movement, when they were allowed in the clubs. I was over at Harrah's, and this black man came in and ordered a drink. The bartender finally served him, and the bartender stood right in front of him until he finished the drink. Then he took the glass, and he broke it in the sink. And I just turned around and walked out. Even though Harolds Club was guilty, it's hard to believe that actually went on in this town. Sammy Davis, in his book, said that his big thing was when he played the Strip, that he couldn't even stay in the hotels. And he stayed away, and he always wanted to be able to walk in the front doors.

MS: I heard that they couldn't stay in the hotel. I knew that.

YD: The Mills brothers couldn't stay. They couldn't eat in the restaurant.

MS: I'd heard that, too, which I thought was kind of bad.

YD: The only one that got away with it at the Riverside was Billy Daniels.

PZ: I don't think it was management. I think they were afraid the public would resent it.

YD: Well, I think that's what segregation was all about.

MV: When did they lift that?

DK: Basically 1963, 1964. The John Kennedy administration started it, and Lyndon B. Johnson carried through with it. The actual law was signed in 1964 with L.B.J. as president.

MV: I know I had a brother and sister who were black, that used to come up and play with me all the time in the 1960s. And I enjoyed them very much. My favorite customers. Used to come in all the time and play with me.

DK: I've seen a lot of pictures of Harold Sr.'s office and Pappy's office with pictures of John F. Kennedy on the wall. Does that ring a bell with any of you?

MS: Yes, these are big, shiny, eight by ten, black and white photos. I have three or four of them.

DK: If my memory's right, Harolds Club was closed the day of John Kennedy's funeral. Do any of you remember that?

MS: Yes, yes. I remember.

DK: We were talking yesterday about the various times that Harolds Club had been closed, and at first we thought it had only been closed a few times, but after talking to some of the employees that worked there in the 1940s, we discovered it was closed several times.

YD: Oh, really?

DK: During the war, it was closed because of a curfew. It was closed every night at midnight for eight hours and was closed on VJ Day when the war ended in Japan. It was also closed on the day of John F. Kennedy's funeral, and it was closed on Good Friday quite frequently in the 1940s and 1950s, as many businesses were.

MV: For three hours.

DK: For three hours on Good Friday, yes.

AH: Yes, they had to close, too, while the Golden Hotel was burning.

MS: Yes, but there were a lot of people that didn't want to leave their slot machines. The fire hoses were going all through the building, and customers were still pulling handles.

AH: Harold played his violin over the loudspeaker. [laughter] I remember that.

DK: Do any of you remember if they closed the club for Pappy's funeral?

YD: I don't think so.

JW: I don't believe they did.

MS: I don't know whether they closed it, but it seemed like everybody went to the service.

DK: You were all there when John Wesley Noble was working with Harold Smith Sr., writing the book *I Want to Quit Winners*. Did any of you ever talk with John Wesley Noble?

MS: Oh, yes. I talked to him quite a bit. I asked him what other books he'd written, and he'd written *Never Plead Guilty*, which was later made into a movie. And he'd written for a psychiatrist, *Man, the Manipulator*. And he'd written for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

DK: Did he just talk to you, or was he interviewing you?

MS: No. We were just talking. I guess he was more or less interviewing us, but not being too obvious about it.

DK: Were you aware that he was writing a book, or that he later wrote a book about Pappy Smith?

MS: No, I didn't find that out until the Summa Corporation came in. Paula Kline was the one that told me that. As a matter of fact, she told me that she had read the rough draft of it.

JW: That's when I was interviewed, when it was about Pappy's book, but not when he was writing Harold's book.

DK: Did you talk to John Wesley Noble, Todd?

YD: Just to chat. It wasn't an interview, as far as I know. He was just chatting. He'd stop by the game once in a while, if it was dead, and just talk.

DK: Tell us about how Harold marketed his book, *I Want to Quit Winners*, Jim. Do you have any memories of that?

JW: Well, he gambled a lot across the street at Bernie Einstoss's place, the Horseshoe. And I can recall one time, he'd won some money over there, but he didn't leave any tokes. But a half an hour later, he sent somebody back over with a whole stack of books to give to the dealers as a toke.

YD: [sarcastically] They must have been thrilled.

[group laughter]

DK: Did he give away a lot of books?

JW: Gave away a lot of books.

DK: Do you think he gave away more than he sold?

JW: I have no idea how many they sold.

DK: What do you think, Todd?

YD: I think he did. I think he gave away more than he sold.

DK: Have you read his book, Cleo?

CC: Yes.

DK: What did you think of it?

CC: Oh, I enjoyed it. There are books I liked better, but I thought it was a pretty good book.

DK: How long did it take them to write that book?

MS: Two or three years. And they were always taking off. He and Harold would

go off some place. They'd go overseas and travel around. And Harold was very eccentric in some of the things he did.

DK: How do you mean eccentric?

MS: Well, I can't recall exactly what was in the book, but it had something to do with the opera. Harold got a type of cape that they used to wear years ago, and it sounded pretty eccentric to me.

DK: Well, did he do a lot of those things when he was sober, or did he have to be drinking to do them?

MS: That wasn't mentioned in the book, I don't think.
[group laughter]

DK: What do you think, Jim? Was he ec centric?

JW: Yes, he was eccentric, all right.

PZ: I've seen him ride through the ca sino on his horse in the front door, and out the back door.

JW: When he took the horse into the club, it was because he wanted . . . they had the original old escalator, and it was very narrow. And he was trying to get the horse on there to show people that a horse could go up the escalator better than somebody else who was always falling down there. They were always pulling people off the escalator who had fallen. But the horse wouldn't fit. It couldn't fit up the escalator.

YD: Harold brought his horse, Yankee Doodle, to the back bar, and he gave Yank a bucket of beer. I saw it.

JW: Lois had a horse that looked a lot like Harold's. Her horse's name was Bobby Sox. They were both palominos.

YD: I hadn't been in the business very long, and I thought, "These people are all crazy!"

[group laughter]

DK: Let's talk about some recollections that you have of the Smith family. Pauline talked about dancing with Pappy. Do you have any other recollections of Harold Sr.?

PZ: Well, there's one thing I remember about Harold. One night he came to Eugene's[1] for dinner, and he told my husband, "You're not charging enough for your meals."

DK: [laughter]

PZ: That's about the only thing I can re member.

MS: I can remember I was dealing up near the front near the pan games, and he went by. The next thing I know, one of the bosses came to me I think it was Chuck Webster and he says, "Harold Sr. wants to see you in the office."

That was when it was behind the back bar. And Harold said to me, "I think I saw you pay off when you shouldn't have." And I didn't recall it.

I said to him, "Well, Harold," I says, "you know, I'm human like everybody else. I make mistakes."

"That's all right," he said. "We make mistakes. Now add up these figures." So, I added them up just like that. "You do very well. Go back to your table." I was shaking so bad, I didn't know what to do.
[laughter]

Another time, he was coming down the escalators, and I was on the table that was across from the twenty five cent tables as you come down the escalators. And he came down, and he walked up to the table. He said, "Marcia, is there something you want to know?"

And I says, "No." I didn't understand the question. Then I said, "But there is something." I said, "I've never seen you deal," and I said, "I've heard you're a fantastic dealer." Well, he come around, and he got the cards. He was out there, and before you knew it, there was a crowd around the table and photogra phers and everything. [laughter]

I thought, "Well, I got out of that."

DK: So, he was a pretty good dealer flamboyant?

MS: Yes, flamboyant, yes. He did deal pretty good.

DK: Did any of the rest of you ever see him deal? Did you ever see him deal, Cleo?

CC: I never saw him deal.

DK: Did you ever see him deal, Jim?

JW: Just briefly on the wheel.

DK: Did he go in to give somebody a break where there was big action?

JW: No, I think he was just going in to let people know that he was there.

MS: Yes, he used to come in every once in a while and do that. He used to do it on the roulette wheel. Harold used to even gamble on the tables. That was when the owners were allowed to gamble in the club. And he used to love to play roulette.

And he would test you out. I know I was racking chips for Eleanor DeWitt one day when he came in, and boy, I used to just quake in my boots when Harold came around. Harold was sitting there playing, and he'd have chips, dimes, nickels, and pennies stacked up on a number, and if it hit, Eleanor would know the answer right away. She was great at that. And there was a girl, Alice, that was a deaf and dumb gal that used to deal roulette, and she was fantastic, too. To be handicapped and do that kind of work, it was just fantastic.

PZ: Pappy used to go behind the table once in a while and deal blackjack and break his hand so he could pay every body.

MS: And every now and then, you'd see somebody following him from table to table, because he knew that with Pappy going there, he'd have a chance to col lect double at each table. And we'd just tell Pappy, "We've got friends today," and Pappy would go to the next table instead of stopping there.

JW: As you very well remember, when he was dealing he'd get through and break the hand on purpose, and then he'd turn to the dealer, and he says, "Now, would you mind, please, paying these poor bastards?"

MS: [laughter] Yes, yes, yes.

JW: With all due respect, I mean, he looked at it in that way.

MS: Yes, yes. I know.

AH: He loved them, too.

MS: And people used to remark about that sign he had up all the time, "Don't

bet any more than you can afford to lose." That was up there when the place closed, and people still remarked on that, because I was working there at the time in 1995.

DK: Did you ever deal to Harold, Todd?

YD: Yes, at the crap table. Senior and Junior, too.

DK: Did they bring their cash with them, or did they take markers?

YD: No, they had money. They had cash, and they'd bring their friends like Bernie Einstoss and Ruby Mathis. And who else, Jim?

JW: Eddie Sahati.

YD: Well, I never dealt to Eddie. It was Nick Sahati that I dealt to, you know, and I'm probably the only person in the world that liked Nick. Harold used to get mad at me, because I was nice to him. And here is the reason I was nice to Nick Sahati. I was just breaking in, and I was on fifteen craps, up where the restaurant was when the graveyard shift came on, and Dan Orlich said, "What table are you on?" And I told him, and he says, "Oh, no."

And I thought, "Now, what?" So, he takes me upstairs, and here's this man whom I'd never seen before playing all this money. And I was terrified. In fact, I was so frightened, my fingers wouldn't even bend. Nick had lost about twenty five thousand dollars. And Dan was standing on this side of me, and here this guy's ranting and raving, and I'm like this. And he grabbed me by my arm and drug me over. I thought he was going to kill me. I really did.

DK: Sahati grabbed you by the arm?

YD: Yes. He whispered in my ear, and he says, "Hell, kid, don't be scared." He says, "I just make a lot of noise."

And Dan says, "Let go of her."

And I thought, how any man could lose twenty five thousand dollars in half an hour, or whatever it was, and still be nice to some dummy that didn't really know how to deal the game, was be yond me. So, from that time on, I told Harold, "I'm going to be nice to him for ever."

Of course, Harold hated him. I don't know the real story on that. I know that he was close to Eddie, and I don't know why he disliked Nick so much. I think it had something to do with the lake, didn't it, Jim?

JW: Well, partially, yes. But I never saw Nick play at the same time Eddie did. Nick played later on, but I don't ever re member them being in partnership on the same table. You're right. Nobody, including Harold, liked Nick Sahati.

YD: Well, I did. [laughter]

DK: Did you deal to Eddie, Arline?

AH: I dealt to Nick, not Eddie. I think Eddie had died by the time I got there.

JW: I dealt to Eddie. He was always very quiet, very gentlemanly, and never noisy or argumentative.

MS: There was this one guy that used to fill his pockets with silver dollars, and we used to wonder how his pants stayed up. Well, one day they didn't stay up but he had long underwear on.

[group laughter]

MS: He had all these silver dollars in his pockets, and when he stood up, his pants

came down. [laughter] It was really funny. We used to kid between ourselves when that happened.

DK: Did Harold Jr. ever deal dice or deal any of the games in the club, Jim?

JW: Not that I remember, no.

YD: Yes, he did.

DK: Do you remember him, Todd?

YD: He and I opened the crap table on the seventh floor. He cut silver and chips better than anybody I've ever seen, but he used to practice it hour after hour af ter hour.

DK: You mean he dealt on the seventh floor the first night it opened?

YD: Yes, on the crap table. I can re member they had to close the drapes behind me, because I have acrophobia. Harold thought I was kidding when I said, "You better close it, or I'm leaving." All I could see were lights and open space behind me. And so they closed the drapes until they got me off the table.

DK: Did Harold Jr. deal very long?

YD: I don't remember how long we were on the table. He wasn't assigned to the table, and I don't remember him ever dealing a table on a regular basis, but he could deal. Harold Jr. was a fine dealer.

DK: Did Pappy ever deal a game?

PZ: Only when he wanted to give his money away.

JW: When he was doubling bets.

DK: Did you ever deal to Harold Jr., Todd?

YD: Once.

DK: Just once?

YD: On a twenty one game.

MS: I dealt at the Gun Club to him and some of his buddies.

YD: Well, I take that back. I dealt to Harold Junior and Senior on that big crap game that night till they got me off the table. I didn't want to deal it.

DK: Can you tell about that famous crap game?

YD: Well, as I say, I did not stay on that game, but it was on graveyard, and I was running smoke breaks on ten dice, and all of a sudden, here comes Bernie Einstoss with Ruby Mathis, Harold Sr., and Harold Jr. Harold did something strange, and I have never seen it done before or since, but I figured out that it meant it was going to be a closed game when he took two handfuls of silver and just scattered them all the way around the outside of the layout on the crap table. And I thought, "What's he doing?"

Then he looked at me, and said, "Do you want a drink?"

And I didn't drink then. I said, "No, thank you."

He says, "I don't mean orange juice, either." He said, "This is going to be a long night."

That's when Dan Orlich came over, and I said, "You better get me out of here," so Gayle DeWeese and Clint Gillette went on that game, and it went on for twelve hours.

JW: Oh, yes, at least.

YD: I was never so happy to get off the table in my whole life.

DK: What was the end result of the game?

YD: I don't know how much money they won. They won quite a bit of money.

DK: Who won quite a bit of money?

YD: Harold Sr. and Harold Jr.

MV: And all his friends.

JW: And Bernie Einstoss.

YD: Harold Jr. and Harold Sr. won a lot of money. I don't know about Bernie Einstoss. That was when Harold Jr. went down and bought the three Lincolns one for his father and one for Kay Starr and one for himself. But he had to go to San Francisco to do it, because he walked into the dealership here, and they thought, "Here's some punk kid." Remember, it was in Herb Caen's column that he had to go down to San Francisco in order to get the cars, because the salesman just went, "Oh, yes, sure. Three of those cars?" And they were, what, Jim, twelve, thirteen thousand?

JW: Right around there. Ten or twelve, yes.

YD: And there was only how many of those cars made?

JW: Very few. It was the first year that they put out that model.

MS: Well, I dealt to Harold and a bunch of his friends out at the Gun Club. As a matter of fact, he even brought his barber out and told him to cut his hair while he was playing. But they didn't win money. I took it all from them. I was the last table open out there, and I had racks of chips on top of racks of chips. I took all their money, and when they lost all their money, that was when they closed the table. That's what I was hoping for, to get out of there.

DK: Harolds was famous for the bill board signs, "Harolds Club or Bust." Do you remember any customers ever coming in and talking about it and saying, "Gee, I came here because I saw those signs"?

AH: Well, when I was in high school back East, I remember I flipped open a book of matches, that said "Harolds Club or Bust." And I didn't know what Harolds Club was, but I saw Reno, Nevada, on it. And that was a big impression, because that was *way* far away from me.

MS: I'd have people mostly guys come in and throw their money down and say, "Well, if I lose this, I want a barrel to leave in." So there was a lot of attention paid to the man in the barrel. And then, of course, there was always talk about how Pappy was so good to the servicemen during the war.

DK: The Winter Olympics were held at Lake Tahoe in 1960 at Squaw Valley. Do you remember any promotions that were put on by the club for the Olympics?

AH: Yes, we all wore the hats representing the different countries. There were little Swiss hats and straw hats and French hats for the cancan.

MS: I know Pappy had bus tours, and here, again, it wasn't mandatory, but whoever wanted to go on the bus tour to acquaint themselves with the Olympics it was in 1960 could go up there.

They gave us material and all the information about the Olympics, so that any player coming in could ask us a question, and we would know how to answer them.

DK: Did you go up to that, Jim?

JW: Oh, I went up to the Olympics, but not in regards to the club. But I do remember that. I think it was through Pappy that they had a survey in the club of all the employees that spoke more than one language, or that had a multitude of languages available, because they knew that people were going to come down to Reno and as it turned out, into Harolds Club that would only speak the one language. So, he was trying to find out if there were any employees and there were quite a few that spoke more than just the English.

MS: Anita Thompson was one.

JW: Yes.

MS: She spoke several languages.

MV: Pauline Zahnd.

DK: Were you used as an interpreter, Pauline, at the Olympics?

PZ: I know I was involved somehow, but I don't remember the details.

JW: They had one man in charge, and he had come to the United States when he defected. He was a professor of cello, and he was Polish, I believe, Wolfram Chanin. And he defected from a musical concert tour and eventually ended up in the United States and, of course, into Harolds Club. So, they made him in charge of this, surveying all the people in the club, because at that time, he spoke twelve languages. There was one fellow, in particular. He was a big man. He was a professional boxer, and he fought in Reno. He was from the Argentine. His name was Eduardo. So, they went to him, and they asked him if he spoke any foreign languages, and he says, "Yes, si." He says, "I speak Spanish, Portuguese, and a little bit of English."

MS: [laughter]

JW: But this Wolfram Chanin, he was the one that coordinated the groups, because he spoke a lot of languages, but he would not go anywhere near the Russians. I was told later that the Russians had gone into Poland, and they had taken his father and murdered his father. Soon after that, Chanin defected on a concert tour and finally came here to the United States.

DK: Room 25 opened that year. It was called Room 25 because Harolds had been open for twenty five years, but it was also opened in conjunction with the Olympics, and there was a baccarat game opened in the room. Do you recall anything about the baccarat game, Todd?

YD: The only thing I remember about the baccarat game is that just after dinner, the phone rang, and someone told my husband, Tom Davis, that the baccarat game had been ripped off. A "cold shoe" was put in the game, and the club was taken for a little over twenty five thousand. And that's about all I knew about baccarat, because Tom and Harold left the house and went down to the club.

MS: Well, we had some guy come in there one night playing twenty one that was in the book, *Green Felt Jungle*. Chuck Webster stopped me as I went into Room 25. I was running the breaks in there. Lois Bates was dealing, and I can't think of anybody else. It was two tables. I was bleaching my hair at the time, and I can remember I went in there, and this guy came up, and Chuck told me, "Break the deck every hand, whether he plays one hand, two hands, three hands, whatever."

Well, that kind of shook me up right there, but when I walked in, the guy threw me a twenty dollar chip, and he says, "Now, let's you and I get along, Marcia." He says, "You need a bleach job," because my roots were showing.

[group laughter]

MS: I thought, "Oh, no! What am I go ing to do?" [laughter] So, anyhow, I dealt to him, and I broke the deck. And he put some more money up, and I guess it was about three hands, and I broke the deck each time.

And he leaned right over the table. He says, "You know, we're just not going to get along, if you keep on doing this."

"I'm just doing what I'm supposed to do." [laughter] Anyhow, he tried again, but it didn't work, so he left, and he went down to Harrah's and beat them out of seventy thousand dollars.

DK: Did they take the baccarat game out after that?

YD: I don't remember. I was never at Room 25 that much.

MS: It didn't stay in there that long. They put the pan games up there and a couple more twenty one games.

DK: Did you ever work Room 25, Arline, when the baccarat was in there?

AH: I never worked in Room 25 as a steady job. Occasionally, every once in a while, I'd go in there.

DK: Did they have a dice table in there?

MS: All they had were twenty one tables, and there were only two twenty one tables and the baccarat to start with. Then after they took the baccarat table out, they had pan games and more twenty one games. That's all.

MV: I worked in there a couple of years, opened it at one o'clock in the after noon. I worked one to nine in there for at least two years.

JW: Right above the Room 25, later on, is where they had that training school for dice dealers. I can remember Betty Barlow worked up there as an instruc tor.

AH: That was the old Fort Smith, wasn't it? That's where I learned craps, up there.

MS: There used to be kind of a winding stairway that went from downstairs into the Roaring Camp Room. Remember when they had all the old wagons hang ing from the ceiling and stuff like that? That was before the escalators were in, wasn't it? Because I can remember walk ing up those stairs.

JW: Yes, the one stairway came right off the alley.

DK: What was Fort Smith? Was that an area in the club?

AH: It was on an upper level over the Roaring Camp Room.

DK: What was in there?

AH: Some slot machines and a crap table.

DK: Did you learn to deal there?

AH: Yes. They had a class up there for one solid month, the month of February.

DK: Did they ever have a live game up there?

AH: No, no, this was just to teach students.

MS: I remember going up in that room. After the club was sold, I remember going up in there to refresh myself at roulette. Every once in a while I'd go through a class in roulette, because when you're not on it for a long time, you forget the payoff.

AH: I really don't remember anything up there except slot machines and that crap table.

YD: I don't remember them ever having a school.

AH: They didn't have very many of them. I just happened to hit one. We'd go to school during the week, and I'd sell change on weekends.

MS: I never went to a school. I had about an hour's education on an empty table when I learned twenty one. Of course, roulette was different. As I say, I used to rack the chips with an experienced dealer.

DK: Earlier Marjorie and a couple of you said you felt bad when you took money away from people. Did you ever get a feeling from any of the bosses, during the Smith family regime, that they wanted to win money, or that they got upset when you lost money?

MS: No, no.

MV: Never, no.

YD: I did.

AH: I did in other casinos, but not here.

MV: Yes, other casinos. You could lose twenty dollars in another casino, and they'd take you off the table.

DK: What were you going to say, Todd?

YD: Well, I know most bosses don't like to lose. And in a big game or something, if you're blowing, I mean, you're not happy about it.

MV: But they never put pressure on the dealer.

AH: I don't think they ever did.

YD: I could feel it. I mean, I'm sorry, but I could.

MV: I remember one time I begged them to take me off. I lost ten thousand dollars on the second floor. I *begged* them to take me off, and they wouldn't take me off.

YD: Well, it's a big club; that's why. You had so many games being ground out that, say, a fifty thousand dollar loss didn't really hurt that much. But, oh, there

wasn't pressure like there is in other casi nos. Not at all. But you could still feel it from some of the bosses, not that they were going to do anything about it, but I could feel the disapproval. They just didn't like losing.

MS: I never ran into anything like that ex cept after the club was sold.

YD: I may have brought it on myself. I worry too much.

MS: Well, yes, you might have. I was very nervous when I first started dealing twenty one. I felt like everybody was worried. [laughter]

DK: They were just worried because you were dealing.

[group laughter]

MS: I can remember after it was sold, this guy came up. It was an empty table, and he put a hundred dollars down on the table, and Johnny Sanford was the pit boss behind me. The guy won the bet, and he took the bill back, and he played the chips. Nineteen hands he won in a row. And the twentieth hand, he lost. And poor Johnny Sanford was walking up and down the pit, up and down the pit. [laughter] And after the guy left and the guy never toked me or anything Johnny Sanford said, "What in the hell were you doing?"

I said, "I don't know. He was just lucky."

JW: Johnny Sanford wasn't a bad guy compared to some of those other ones.

MS: No. That was the first time I'd ever known him to sweat. As a matter of fact, he was a sweetheart, really, as a boss.

DK: Would any of you like to describe the once only book?

JW: The originations of that was for the public, for the ones that gambled, but it was supposed to be a minimal amount, and whatever we were able to give them was authorized, and usually it was a proportion of the amount that they lost after we checked with the dealers to verify the loss. The idea was, well, you don't get any more until it is paid off. It was originally designed to get somebody back to wherever they came from, if they lost all their money. It was supposed to be for transportation.

YD: It was the best advertisement gim mick we had, because people said, "You know, they were nice enough to give me gas money."

MS: Yes, yes. It was really good.

JW: It finally, at one time, got to be . . . I remember the figure of eight hundred thousand dollars in one year, and, of course, it escalated to the point where the customers were getting a lot more money than what they really should have. But it was a big publicity factor. A lot of people took advantage of it, but it was good that people knew about it. I don't think there was any other casino that ever did that.

MS: And the dealers used to have to verify what the guy had lost at their table.

JW: Yes, that's right.

AH: Pappy also used to give out loans and not charge any interest. He'd just de duct it from your paycheck with no inter est.

MV: That's right.

PZ: He would take so much a week out of your check.

JW: I remember one time Harold came up with this guy, and it was on the main floor right near where the cashier's booth was, and he had this guy in tow. He comes up to me with this fellow on his arm, and he turns to the fellow, and he says, "Now, would you please tell this man what you need, or what you want, what you just asked me?"

And the guy starts talking and I can't duplicate it in the richest Irish brogue you've ever heard. He said, "I was just asking this gentleman if I couldn't borrow a five," with that really rich brogue.

And Harold turns to me and says, "Now, can you refuse that man any money that he wants?" He says, "Give him what he wants," and it was a five dollar bill but only because he had the Irish brogue. [laughter]

DK: Well, the reason for the name "once only," then, is that you could get it once only, but if you paid it back, then you could continue to get it back throughout that year.

JW: Yes, but it got out of hand. It escalated to where a lot of people got money even though they'd been on there before. Then, the next trip, if they would have lost something, you would verify that; then, once again, you gave them up to a certain amount.

DK: Didn't Harold Sr. love to get on the microphone and talk? He would talk about the floor men or the show on the seventh floor.

JW: Yes, he would advertise the shows on the seventh floor. About an hour before the show went on, Harold got on the mike and said the drinks were on the house on the seventh floor for one hour. And he used to say, "Clock time, one hour." He said, "But if you come, be sure that you've taken a bath." Some of those old bums would go up there to get a free drink.

YD: How could every other club buy drinks for the customers who were playing on the table, and the only time we bought drinks was on the high limit games? How did we get away with that?

AH: I remember Pappy saying, "If you can afford to gamble, you can afford to buy your own drinks."

YD: Is that what it was?

AH: Yes.

YD: I also thought he didn't want to get you drunk and take advantage of you.

AH: You can gauge your own drinking, is the way he meant it.

DK: I don't think any club bought free drinks in those days. I was working at Harrah's Lake Tahoe until late 1963, and they didn't buy drinks up there.

YD: Oh, they didn't?

DK: If you were going to buy a drink for a table, you'd walk up to a table and say, "Harrah's Club would like to buy you a drink," or, "Harrah's Club would like to buy you a cocktail."

YD: Oh, I didn't know that. I thought the other clubs did.

DK: No. It eventually evolved into it, be cause it's like anything else. Somebody started giving free drinks, so then some body said, "Oh, gee, we better give a free drink, too."

I can remember the hostess com ing up to me at Harolds Club and say ing, "There's a guy on number three twenty one. He's betting five dollar chips. Can I get him a drink?" So, they had to be betting at least five dollars or more, and that was in the early 1960s.

MS: Yes, I can remember that. It seems to me now that I remember that, be cause I think the drinks used to only cost about fifty cents, anyhow.

DK: Later on, in the 1960s, eventually all the drinks became free.

JW: When the club first opened, they didn't have any bars, and Pappy was always in charge of the bars. He owned the bars, separately. And I don't remem ber, it might have been a couple, three years after the club opened. I think it was during the war when they found other people were going outside of the casino to get their booze.

DK: Marcia can tell us a lot about that, because she had a relative that worked in the bar department.

MS: Well, my father in law, Leo Schwarz, was the first bar manager that Harold ever had, but what year that was, I don't know.

DK: I believe it was, like Jim said, during the war.

MS: Well, it's a possibility.

YD: I think it was before that, Dwayne, because Harold told me that they had argued with Pappy about serving drinks, because Pappy was an absolute teeto taler. And he said, "Absolutely not."

And then Pappy came down and wanted to know where the players were, and Harold said, "Dad," he says, "watch." He says, "They're going over to the Bank Club. They're going to go have a drink." He says, "You know that that goes hand in hand."

And so, smart businessman that he was, he opened the bar, and at one time, they poured more booze than any bar in the world, more than the Waldorf Astoria.

MS: And it was just the back bar at that time, wasn't it?

YD: I don't know where the original bar was.

MV: Yes, it was the back bar in 1944. That's the only bar they had when I went to work there in 1944.

JW: They didn't open the restaurant until 1955, because Pappy didn't want to have that kind of a business interfering with other people who had restaurants on the outside.

DK: He didn't want to compete with his friends.

JW: That's right. He didn't want to cre ate competition.

DK: Do any of you remember why Harolds Club only had twenty dollar chips? They didn't have twenty five dol

lar chips. Does anybody know the rea son for that?

MS: Well, I think every place that opened up started having twenty five dollar chips. I don't know. But it seemed like we were the last to let go of the twenty dollar chips.

YD: I don't know anybody who ever had them. Did anybody else ever have twenty dollar chips?

DK: Not that I know of.

YD: I don't think so, either. We were just odd. And then when we got twenty five dollar chips, it was hard to convert. But I think we were the only club that *ever* had twenty dollar chips. And I don't know the reason behind that.

DK: Well, does anyone have any per sonal recollections or anecdotes of any of the Smith family, or any particular story they'd like to tell about Harolds Club? Todd, how about you?

YD: I think one of the saddest things I heard at Harolds Club was about Harold Jr. He told me this himself. When his name was Raymond, before he changed his name to Harold Smith Jr., they lived on Plumas and Urban right there on the cor ner by the golf course. And, of course, both of his parents, Dorothy and Harold, were down at the club all the time get ting the business going, and he used to just walk around the neighborhood. He said he had holes in his socks and a couple of hundred dollars in his pocket, and he was hoping somebody would ask him in to have dinner. I thought, "That is the saddest story."

DK: Jim, you probably knew the Smiths better than anyone here.

JW: Well, I have a couple about Harold. These are kind of like little jokes, but there were two and one about Pappy. I think I've told this before. The Smiths, as I found out later, they were all kind of hard of hearing. They all had some problem with hearing, including Pappy. I got on the elevator on the main floor, and it goes up to the second floor, and one of the colored maids that we had got on. There were two colored maids. So, she goes over to the corner, and I'm standing in the other corner. The elevator goes up to the third floor, and here's Pappy com ing on. He's going up to his little office on the fourth floor, and when he gets on, he looks over, and he sees the colored lady, and he says, "Hello," he says, "real nice to see you."

And boy, she perks up, she said, "Well, real nice to see you." She says, "How y'all doing?"

Pappy says, "Is that so?"

[group laughter]

JW: And one other about Harold. Obvi ously, Harold drank all the time, but it was intermittent. He would drink and then be on the wagon and drink and be on the wagon, much to the chagrin of his fa ther. But anyway, at this particular time, Harold was at the bar drinking coffee, and he was on the wagon. Well, some guy that he must have known or the guy knew Harold comes up to Harold, and he was kind of needling him, and he says, "How about buying you a drink, Harold?" He knew that Harold was on the wagon.

And Harold says, "Oh, I don't think I'll take that drink, partner, because I'm afraid that after one week of drinking, you'd get up and leave me, and I'd get awfully lonesome."

[group laughter]

JW: And one other little silly thing. I only remember this because, to my knowl edge, there was only one man that worked in the club that had a little mus tache, and that was because of Harold. Harold did not want anybody working in the club that had a mustache, because it reflected back, I think, in his mind, to the old river boat gamblers. In history, they always had a mustache when they'd come aboard the river boats, and there was gambling there, and they were always cheaters. So, I think Harold had that reason for not wanting anybody to wear mustaches. And Harold said one time this fellow came up to him and was starting to talk to him, but he had a big mustache. He says, "The guy talked to me for about five minutes, but when he got through," he says, "I didn't have any knowledge or any idea as to what he said, because all I could watch was that little mustache going up and down."

MS: [laughter]

DK: Why do you suppose he let the one man, Harry Burke, work in Harolds Club?

JW: Because he had worked with Pappy in San Francisco, and he was hired by Pappy.

MS: Here's another story. Harold came up to the second floor near where the Silver Dollar Bar used to be. There was a roulette table behind me, and my twenty one table was right there. He sent somebody over to my table and said, "Tell that dealer to come over and see me at the bar." And here I am, I couldn't leave my table. He didn't tell the other person to take me off, so he's saying, "Get over here."

And I'm looking at the table like, "Well, what do I do with this?"

"Don't worry about it."

MS: So, I went over to him, and he said, "Now, you see that dealer over there? You go and take her out and tell her to come and see me." So, I took her out, and he fired her. [laughter] Now, here he made me leave my table wide open with the money on it to go down and get that dealer. Crazy!

DK: Was he sober then, or was he drink ing?

MS: Well, I didn't see him drinking, but he used to come in and do the weirdest things.

DK: When Harold Sr. came in, and he had been drinking or was drunk, did it affect the dealers, the pit bosses, or the customers? Was he in the club a lot, drunk or drinking?

JW: I don't remember him being obvi ously drunk when he came into the ca sino. I don't remember that, because he was always avoiding his father, in a sense, avoiding the fact that he was drinking at that time. That's why he got out of town a lot of times. I don't remember any scene because he was drunk.

DK: So Pappy was always in charge of the place, but when Senior was there, he had certain functions that he performed. Was there any gap when Senior was gone out of the club?

JW: Well, Harold was president of the club for a while, until he started to try and gamble the club away, and that's when Pappy took it away from him, took the title away from him.

MS: But I think if neither one of them were there, the bosses just kind of ran the place, didn't they?

DK: It just ran, in other words?

MS: It just ran.

JW: Oh, yes.

MS: That's what I mean. There was no pressure around here.

YD: But, oh, he was manic. I mean, when he was drinking, he could walk around the club and come in here and be in a great mood, and walk around the other way and come back, and he'd be in a vile mood.

MV: Right.

YD: And you just wanted to go hide. I wouldn't want to have been a boss. He didn't bother the dealers. As far as I know, he never did.

MS: Well, it'd be out of the blue, some of the things he'd do.

JW: Didn't he do a lot of drinking on the seventh floor, when they were gambling a lot up there?

MS: I never saw him drinking up there.

YD: He'd drink at the Silver Dollar Bar.

DK: Wasn't the Silver Dollar Bar kind of a hangout for Junior and Senior?

YD: Yes. The only time I ever knew him to stop drinking, he used to take a vow to the church and to the nuns that he wouldn't drink for, like, a year. And the only thing I think Harold ever thought was stronger than Harold was God.

AH: Didn't he tell in his book about tak ing pills?

YD: Oh, Harold was one of those that take pills and think that if one was good, four were better. Right, Jim?

JW: That's what he felt. He took a multi tude of pills.

MS: That's what I think. I think they did something to him up here. (Pointing to her head)

JW: Yes.

MS: It wasn't so much the liquor, al though the liquor destroys the brain cells. Pappy wasn't like that at all.

PZ: Perhaps he was. Maybe that's why he didn't drink at all.

YD: I don't know.

PZ: No, no. I mean as a young man, perhaps he discovered that he had a problem.

YD: That's possible, but I've never heard any stories.

MS: He was very visible and very ap proachable. You could go up and talk to him. I think that's what made the place.

JW: That's right.

MS: You don't ever see an owner of any of these other clubs in town. They're not visible at all. But Pappy was visible to his employees and players alike, and any body could approach him.

DK: Well, out of the twenty four hour pe riod, almost every day, one of the Smiths was visible in the club, whether it was Junior, Senior, Raymond A., Pappy, or whoever.

JW: Pappy more than anyone. He was always in his office.

AH: I almost never saw Raymond in the club. I think that I saw him a couple of times, maybe, total.

MS: No, I didn't see Raymond.

AH: He was always up in the office.

YD: Until he came in and fired the whole graveyard shift one time.

JW: Raymond A.?

YD: Yes. He had a new girlfriend, and he had been drinking, came in I had just started there and I thought we re ally all got fired. They said, "Just go to the break room, come back in about an hour." He was showing off.

Note

1. Eugene's was an elegant restaurant on South Virginia, and Pauline's husband, Walter, was one of the owners.

20

Hired in the 1960s

Rose Kling, Wilma "Willie" Evans, Sally Ennes, Bonnie Good Matthews, and Meri Price

Dwayne Kling[DK]: I'll start off by asking you, Sally, when and how were you hired?

Sally Ennes[SE]: I was hired in February 1966, and I remember being interviewed by Gene Doty.

DK: Did you apply for any specific job?

SE: I think I just applied, and I talked to Mr. Doty. He was the bar manager. And then I just ended up on change. I had to start on change.

DK: Did you go into the personnel office and get an application? Were you out actively looking for a job?

SE: Yes. I was looking for a job. And I can remember one specific thing, that they kept asking me, "Are you sure you're not getting a divorce?"

And I said, "No, I'm not getting a divorce." In fact, I'm still married to the same man. [laughter]

DK: Do you recall having any interviews with anyone else?

SE: No, I don't.

DK: How about you, Meri? When did you start?

Meri Price[MP]: I'm not really sure what year. Prob ably about 1967, 1968. I had been taught how to deal at Harrah's Club.

DK: Oh, you knew how to deal when you came to work?

MP: I knew how to deal. So, I just went into the per sonnel office, filled out an application, got hired, and started dealing at Harolds.

DK: Did they know you were an experienced dealer?

MP: Yes, they did.



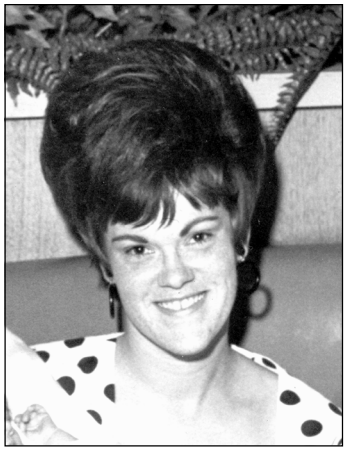
Sally Ennes



Wilma “Willie” Evans



Rose Kling



Bonnie Good Matthews



Meri Price

DK: Because there was a long stretch of time there, where they didn't hire anyone that wasn't an experienced dealer.

MP: Yes. At the time, my husband was working there, although they hired him as an experienced dealer, also.

DK: When were you hired, Bonnie?

Bonnie Good Matthews[BG]: Rose says 1965; I have forgotten.

[group laughter]

Rose Kling[RK]: Well, she was hired a week or two before I was hired.

DK: Were you actively pursuing a job?

BG: Yes, I was.

DK: Did you put applications anywhere else?

BG: No, I went right straight to Harolds Club. And I went up to Esther Stephens office, and Esther told me to go home, and she would call me. I was going to spend the day at my mother's the next day, so I called her the next morning, and she said, "Come in tonight at six o'clock in Western clothes. You're going to be on change."

DK: So, you weren't interviewed or anything? You just filled out an application?

BG: I filled out an application, that's all.

DK: It's interesting how different people were hired, especially different decades. Did you ask for any specific job?

BG: No, I didn't ask for anything. I just needed a job, and I started on change. That is where they needed me. I started in the Roaring Camp Room selling nickels.

DK: Who did you report to?

BG: Earl Carpenter.

DK: And what was his position?

BG: He was the slot manager, I believe, on swing shift.

DK: So, you reported to him, and he told you what to do?

BG: Yes, that was it.

DK: How about you, Rose? You say you started about the same time Bonnie did?

RK: Yes, I believe it was about two weeks after Bonnie, because I had seen Bonnie before. I put in an application at Harrah's, and then I put one in at Harolds Club. Harrah's called, but not until after Harolds had already called. Harolds said to come in, and I had an interview with The first one, I believe, was with Steve Derrivan. And then, after Steve Derrivan, I had an interview with Glen Botorff, and I can remember him saying, "You're going to come to work on change." And he said, "Is there anything else that you would ever like to do?"

And I said, "Well, gee, I don't know." I said, "Maybe be a cocktail waitress."

And he said, "Well, would you like to deal?"

And I said, "Oh, I could never do that."

[group laughter]

RK: And, of course, as it turned out, they really were going to train us all to be dealers. I don't think they really *ever* asked me if I wanted to go into cocktails after

that. It was always just go on change and then learn how to deal.

DK: So, did you report to Earl Carpenter also?

RK: Yes, I did. And then he would turn you over to another change person that was already working, and that change person would show you the ropes and tell you how to do your job. As soon as a light goes on, you would run over there and snap off that light and sell change to the customer. And I remember seeing Bonnie the first night that I came to work, and she was over in I think it was called section five. I went into section seven. Section seven had a lot of dime machines, and section five was larger and had a lot of nickel machines. It was a huge section.

BG: [laughter] It was awful.

RK: I was so happy to see Bonnie, be cause it was like I was seeing somebody that I knew. I was just so scared. I'd never worked any place else in my life. And so, to come into a casino, oh, it was scary.

SE: Remember all those heavy, heavy change aprons? Now they push change carts around. Those change aprons were heavy, and I mean *heavy*! And nothing to support your back like they have now. And if you were in the dollar section, you carried hundreds of dollars.

RK: You know who was in my section that helped break me in was Nell Ruth erford. She broke me in and told me how to run the change and how to check out, because you had to know how to check out at the end of the shift. There was a particular way that you had to do it.

You had to put the nickels here, the dimes here, and the quarters over there. Toward the end of the night when your shift was almost over, you tried to con vert a lot of the change that you had inside your apron to currency so you could check out a lot faster. I was think ing, "Oh, I'm never going to be able to do this!"

DK: How about you, Willie? When were you hired?

Wilma "Willie" Evans[WE]: I first was hired in 1952 by Esther Stephens. And I only worked there about three or four months; then I moved back to Las Vegas. I moved back up here in 1954, worked a short time at Cal Neva, then stayed home for a number of years. Then I went back to work at Harolds Club, and I was hired again by Esther. She remembered my maiden name when I came back in. Isn't that amazing?

DK: What year did you come back to Harolds?

WE: 1967.

DK: So, it was thirteen years later.

RK: Did you know how to deal then?

WE: Yes.

DK: Where did you learn to deal?

WE: At Harolds Club in 1952.

DK: Just in that short time that you were there?

WE: On the twenty five cent table, you really learned how to deal in a hurry. People were waiting in line on graveyard to play. Everybody stayed up at night to play twenty five cent blackjack.

DK: When you came back to Harolds in 1967, were you considered an experienced dealer?

WE: Yes.

DK: So, they hired you right on dealing?

WE: Yes. And I was running breaks in the arch lounge and also clear up on the seventh floor. I couldn't find all those tables. How many tables were there?

DK: There were seventy four twenty one tables and thirteen or fifteen crap tables. And I'm not sure on roulettes. I think there were eight roulettes.

WE: I got lost lots of times, because I didn't know where all these tables were.

[group laughter]

BG: Well, they weren't in any order.

WE: And Sally kept wearing these different wigs when she was dealing, and I kept thinking she was a different lady. She was so pretty. I thought, "Gee, that's another pretty lady."

[group laughter]

RK: Well, didn't they have two quarter tables?

SE: Not that I remember. The only one I remember was right there by the floor manager's office. Then the chuck a luck was right next to that, and that was down by the main credit office.

RK: It seems like there were two quarter tables, because sometimes we would get to run breaks on a dollar table after we had worked on the quarter table for so long. And it was a big deal, because you had two quarter tables to break, and then you got to run one break on one of the dollar tables.

BG: I remember that.

RK: And I used to think, "Oh, it's so wonderful to deal to a dollar."

[group laughter]

RK: Because the quarters weren't quarter chips; they were actual real quarters.

WE: Real quarters. They were hard to deal with. I remember one time, Liberace, when he was performing at the Cal Neva on the Copper Ledge, came over and played at my quarter table, and I was just thrilled to death.

SE: He used to bring his mom into Harolds to play the slots when he was in town.

DK: How much did Liberace bet?

WE: A quarter.

[group laughter]

WE: He didn't lose any more than twenty five dollars, but that was when he was first starting out. He was just beginning, but very nice, very sweet. Nice to deal to.

DK: Meri, you learned how to deal in another casino. When you came to Harolds, were you given a set of Harolds Club rules?

MP: Yes, yes.

DK: Did you notice any difference between Harolds Club rules and the other casino's rules?

MP: Yes, I thought Harolds was a lot more lenient, not as strict, and you were able to converse with the customers a lot more and be friendlier. They were more into customer service than other clubs. I learned to deal at the lake at Harrah's, and I worked at Harvey's. And they wanted . . . the more hands, the better. Deal just as fast as you could. And at Harolds Club, you didn't have to do that. It was more customer oriented.

DK: In the other clubs, did they have a floor supervisor or pit boss correct you or say, "You're not following procedure"?

MP: At Harrah's, they were really very strict about how you did things and would watch you all the time.

DK: Was Harolds Club the same way?

MP: No. Like I said, I went in as an expe rienced dealer, so they felt like I knew what I was doing. [laughter] I don't know if I did, but they thought I did.

[group laughter]

MP: And it was just so relaxed and just very nice.

DK: Different atmosphere.

MP: Right. And Harolds Club didn't re ally have pits like the other casinos. The floor bosses walked outside the tables and not behind you so much. And Harrah's, I mean, they were right behind you all the time. I used to deal a lot of high limit at the lake, so they were just right on top of you every minute. They had a lot of action up there.

DK: Was there a much more relaxed feeling in Harolds Club?

MP: Oh, yes, a lot more relaxed. Yes, it was really, really nice. At Harrah's, they really kind of sweat the money. And they didn't do that at Harolds Club, so I got relaxed, and you learned how to be friendly with the customers and hustle them so you could make more money. [laughter]

DK: What was your starting wage when you were on change, Rose?

RK: I think it was fifteen dollars.

BG: That sounds right.

WE: I think so, too. Yes, I remember.

SE: And that's not an hour.

[group laughter]

RK: No, that's not an hour. No, fifteen dollars a day.

DK: Do you remember what you were paid as an experienced dealer, Meri?

MP: Fifteen dollars a day. Fifteen dollars a day.

DK: And these other guys were making fifteen carrying change?

MP: Yes. But with the difference in the tokes because at the lake, the tokes were not that great at all I thought I'd hit a gold mine. I did!

[group laughter]

DK: So, you're saying that you didn't get a raise when you went from carrying change to dealing?

RK: Well, it seems to me like it went up to twenty dollars. I thought we made

more dealing, but maybe it was after we had been there for a little bit longer.

SE: I don't remember.

RK: Fifteen dollars seems to stick in my head.

MP: Yes, that sticks in my head. But we weren't concerned about the salary.

BG: That's what I was just going to say. I don't think I ever saw my check. I just gave it to my husband, and we lived on my tips.

RK: Because even when we were car rying change, we used to make a few tips.

BG: Oh, we made good tips on change.

RK: I mean, I was just amazed. And they were all in silver dollars, most of them. Real silver dollars.

SE: We didn't report tips to the IRS then.

DK: You say you didn't report to the IRS?

SE: No, we weren't required to.

MP: No, you didn't have to then.

RK: I don't think that they thought change people made tokes.

RK: I don't think they even would have asked us.

DK: So, you relied pretty much on your tips, and your salary you gave to your husband. Is that true of all of you?

SE: I gave it all to my husband.

MP: It wasn't enough; it wasn't a lot to give him. We'd put that in the bank, and we lived on my tips on a day to day ba sis.

SE: This is another unique fact about Harolds Club: you could get a loan. Af ter we moved here I think we were here like eight or nine months we were go ing to buy our first home . . . well, our sec ond home. And they loaned us five hun dred dollars for the down payment. Now you need five million.

[group laughter]

SE: And thirty five dollars is what it cost. I had to pay back $535.

DK: Was it Harry Bergmann that okayed the loan?

SE: Yes. We got a loan for five hundred dollars, and it only cost us $535.

DK: What year do you think that was?

SE: It was 1966 in November. That's when we moved in our new home. So, I thought that was unique.

DK: It was.

MP: When you were on a break you could gamble in the club. Rose might say, "God, come over, Meri. I'm really running cold. Come on over." And I would go over and play on my break, make a hundred dollars or whatever, then, "Oh, got to go," run back to work and get on the other side of the table.

SE: Now we can't play table games at all. We have to play only slots, and the slots people can only play table games.

MP: The Hilton won't let you play at all.

DK: How about the Bonanza?

WE: At the Bonanza, the dealers can't play any of the pit games.

RK: Even on your night off?

WE: No, never.

BG: At the Peppermill, you can't play table games.

RK: At the Sundowner you can. You can't play on your shift, but you can play on graveyard, or you can come in on your night off and play.

WE: Or take an EO.[1] I remember the girls EOing, and zip, go on the other side of the table.

RK: Yes, they can't do that now, and you can't play on your own shift any more. You have to wait. Even if you get an early out, you have to wait for grave yard to come on.

DK: Let me ask you how many of you girls are still dealing twenty one?

BG: I've been a pit supervisor since 1982.

MP: I only deal once a month.

[group laughter]

WE: I don't want to hear it.

RK: Sally and I both deal two nights a week.

SE: Yes, we have the best job.

DK: Meri deals one; Willie deals five or six.

WE: Well, I retired twice once or twice and then had to go back to work.

MP: Well, I'm an R.N. (Registered Nurse), so I do that full time, and then I deal at the Hilton just whenever they make me deal, really.

[group laughter]

MP: Just to have the Hilton benefits of the hotel.

SE: But that's going by the wayside.

MP: Then I'll have to quit.

WE: At Harolds Club, you had an anni versary party every year. You would get a notice that you had completed a year's work, and for your anniversary, you could have dinner, have a cake, and could eat anything you wanted for din ner. I thought it was awfully nice. Your whole family could go.

RK: They also took a picture of your en tire family and gave it to you. They put them up in the club. They were put up stairs near the elevator on the third floor.

SE: It was really nice, and if you didn't have a family, you could bring your friends in and drink and eat there for hours. It was really generous, I thought.

DK: So one of the highlights of the year was your anniversary dinner?

BG: And Christmas.

DK: What about Christmas, Bonnie?

BG: The first Christmas we worked there we started in either June or July; I'd been there six months Pappy came around and gave me two hundred dol

lars cash on my game at Christmas and said, "Merry Christmas."

DK: You were dealing already after only six months?

BG: I only worked on change for, like, three months.

SE: I was on change for six months.

RK: I thought we were on change, like, six months, and then Pappy or Senior sent down a notice that said, "The four girls that are coming off the change apron now must learn to deal the wheel before they can deal twenty one."

I remember we were on Darl Voss's shift, and Bill Parga was working the schedule. I went to Bill, and I said, "I have to have a tonsillectomy," and I said, "I can't come off the apron and start when everybody else is."

And he says, "Oh, no, you can't. You can't go to the hospital and have that done."

[group laughter]

RK: I was so naive, and I was so young, still. I said, "Oh," I said, "I'm so sorry!" I said, "I went ahead and scheduled it." I was just, like, crushed.

And he said, "Oh, Rose, I'm just kid ding you. Of course you can."

BG: Yes, I still work with Bill at the Peppermill, and he hasn't changed. [laughter]

RK: About two weeks later, because I don't believe I was gone more than two weeks, I came back, and Bonnie and the other two girls that were taken off change, were racking checks on rou lette. And Bonnie said, "Oh, Rose," she said, "I just hope you don't get Perch to night."

RK: It was my first night there, and Perch was a real tough, tough wheel dealer.

MP: I remember her.

RK: I got Perch the first night out. I was scared to death. I was so scared. But I ended up loving Perch. She ended up being a great teacher and a friend. I re ally liked her.

SE: See now, I never dealt roulette until just the last two, three years of Harolds, because that was another thing about Harolds. Usually, you dealt twenty one, you dealt craps, or you dealt roulette. It was eight hours a day, five days a week. We were just one game dealers; I never dealt any other games there. I would rack chips sometimes, but I just learned to deal roulette maybe five, six years ago.

RK: I remember you racking for me, but we had to learn to deal roulette before we could deal twenty one. We used to rack to learn how to deal the wheel, and then on our breaks we would go over and practice twenty one with another dealer so we could learn to deal twenty one. But they wouldn't turn us loose on a table until our wheel dealer said, "Yes, they know how to deal."

DK: Were the tips less on roulette than twenty one?

BG: Yes. And when you racked checks and made tips, you only got whatever the dealer gave you.

DK: Were some dealers a little more generous or more fair than others?

BG: Yes.

DK: Possibly why some people *had* to learn roulette was because too many people objected to dealing roulette.

SE: Everyone wanted to deal twenty one.

RK: Probably, because you made more money on twenty one.

MP: I never did deal roulette there.

DK: Did you ever deal roulette there, Willie?

WE: No, I just dealt twenty one, and I was too short for the crap table. Now you can stand on the box and deal. [laughter]

RK: Yes, because I remember saying, "I would like to learn to deal craps."

And they said, "No, you're too little. It would hurt you."

WE: That's what they said to me.

RK: I don't know if that was a way of discouraging girls from learning dice or not.

DK: No, it was because you had to be pretty tall to deal.

WE: I think it caused a lot of female health problems.

DK: Yes, it entailed too much stretching over the table.

RK: I remember, too, when we were first learning to deal, we used to have to deal twenty one, one handed. Do you remember that?

SE: Yes, we were taught one handed.

BG: I learned so many different ways, I don't remember.

RK: Right. But when we were first breaking in, I mean, everything was done one handed.

SE: And it had to be right handed. He would not allow left handed dealers at that time.

RK: Right. And I can remember when maybe it was after they sold the club they wanted everybody to deal two handed, because, of course, it was much faster. You could get more hands out. I had to go back to a dealer to learn how to do it, because I didn't know how. I had never been shown how to do that.

DK: Do you recall, Meri, coming down from the lake, if you dealt one hand or two hand?

MP: I was just thinking about that. I think we dealt two handed at the lake, because they wanted a fast game.

RK: Meri used to be able to do that, and I always thought that looked so neat. And they would say, "We don't want you dealing that way."

But she would sometimes just say, "When they aren't looking, I do it any way." Do you remember that?

[group laughter]

DK: Sounds like Meri.

SE: Another thing that I think about today I never thought about it then; I was so dumb, young was the way no one was around those high limit tables in Room 25 . There wasn't any game protection or security. The bosses, they'd just

walk in and out. I mean, here were two high limit games, and nobody paid much attention to them.

DK: Out of all the Smiths, Willie, who do you remember the most? Who did you have the most contact with?

WE: I had more contact with Judy Smith, the lady that was married to Junior. And I really didn't get to know her until we were working at Riverside. But she was quite entertaining. She had just gotten back from Yugoslavia. Remember when they went over to open that casino? Judy would tell me about what a rough time they had there. She was the last to leave, and they were trying to get her passport, and she was hiding in this closet. She was hiding either in or behind this closet with her passport and what few little things she had. She had had to leave everything, and they came looking for her. They didn't find her, and she es caped. I've forgotten how she escaped, but they were after her to try to keep her over there.

DK: Had Harold Jr. already left?

WE: Yes, they had all left by then. She was the last one.

DK: Were they holding her for hostage?

WE: Apparently. I didn't really know all the story, but it was pretty scary.

Junior used to play poker at the Coney Island Bar with my husband all the time. He was down there a lot. But I didn't know any of them personally.

DK: Did you see any of them around the club very much?

WE: Oh, one day Senior came by and looked at my name tag I'm from Ports mouth, Ohio and he says, "That's a good place to be from," and that's about all. Senior was the one that was mostly around the club, he and Junior. But I didn't have contact with them per sonally, at all.

DK: Do you recall ever seeing Raymond A. Smith, Harold's brother?

WE: Yes, occasionally he came through the casino, but not that much. I didn't know who he was at first. I just knew Jun ior and Senior, and later I found out who Raymond was.

I heard a rumor one time that's been many years ago that apparently a redheaded dealer had blown a lot of money, and Senior went through the next day and fired all the redheaded deal ers.

BG: I must not have been there.

[group laughter]

SE: He rode a motorcycle through the club one night.

MP: Oh, God, he rode that motorcycle to the seventh floor. He put it on the el evator, went up there, then got on the crap table and was sunbathing. He parked his motorcycle by the crap table, took his shirt off and got up, laid in the middle of the crap table.

MP: "God," I thought, "he's an idiot." And it smelled so bad up there from that motorcycle.

[group laughter]

SE: I think he brought a horse in there once, too.

RK: Well, the only thing I remember about him was he would always get on the loud speaker, and he would say, "Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to Harolds Club." And he'd ramble on and on and on.

And people would start looking around, saying, "Who *is* that?"

And I'd say, "Well, that's Harold Smith Sr. That's the owner."

SE: He tried to sell those decanters, remember? I wish I'd have bought one.

BG: Decanters? I bought them all.

WE: Yes. I had some, but I think the last time I just said, "Oh, he made enough money." And then, of course, now they're probably worth a million.

SE: I still have a book that was autographed by him, *I Want to Quit Winners*. They gave us that and another book called *Never Gamble or Loan Money*. That was their thing, you weren't supposed to ever borrow money from, or lend money to, another employee.

RK: They also gave us a book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, because that would teach you how to get along with people. And they did have a rule, never loan or borrow money.

DK: Yes, that was theoretically cause for termination.

RK: I remember one night when Senior came in, and I was standing on a roulette table. He threw two Siamese cats on the table, and I was scared to death. I looked up, and here are these cats walking across the table. One of them fell off the end of the table, and I was afraid to touch it, but I grabbed the little leash he had them on leashes and I put it back on the table, because I was afraid if I didn't, he was going to get mad, because his cat strangled himself.

[group laughter]

RK: I don't know why he put them on the table. He rattled on that night about his cats and how beautiful these animals were and I just stood there.

SE: Oh, and he'd hide behind those pillars and just jump out all of a sudden.

RK: Right. You never knew where he was lurking.

SE: Now, Junior, being so tall, you could never miss him.

MP: Yes, I saw him a lot. And I also saw George a lot.

BG: Oh, yes, I liked George, too.

RK: You know, I don't remember George a lot. I remember David more.

BG: Yes, David Smith went to school with me.

RK: And June. Remember June? Laura June Smith?

DK: Laura June Smith was Harold Sr.'s daughter.

WE: I knew Laura June quite well, only mostly after we left Harolds Club. I ran into her about a month ago, and she was so happy. She said, "I just built my dream home out in Washoe Valley." Before she

had lived at Truckee. And anyway, Laura June just looked real happy. I like her. She's a nice lady.

BG: I went to junior high with David and part of high school before they sent him to military school. When he came back, they put him in the business. I taught him how to deal roulette on the table on the second floor by the Silver Dollar Bar.

DK: Do you remember Pappy coming by your table, Bonnie, and talking to you?

BG: Yes. Pappy would come by and pay everybody double, and everybody thought that was wonderful.

SE: People still talk about that.

BG: Yes, they do.

MP: I remember Pappy coming by, so I had to have been there before he died.

RK: Yes. He used to come by and say, "If they win, pay them double." And I remember the floor managers telling us to watch for people that would run in front of Pappy and make a big bet. You know, like make a hundred dollar bet, so that if they won, then they would get paid two hundred. You had to be careful that you didn't let somebody bet that wasn't normally betting on your table.

BG: Yes, Pappy was just an easy going, little, old man that just had a wonderful time down there.

SE: Somebody said he used to take certain dealers upstairs, and they'd dance. Did you ever hear that?

RK: He loved to dance.

DK: How many of you ever remember going to the Silver Dollar Room after work or on your nights off?

MP: We went in the Silver Dollar Room all the time.

RK: We used to go on our nights off.

BG: Or after work.

MP: Especially if Jack Bedient and the Chessmen were there.

DK: Were the drinks free when you got off work?

WE: Oh, yes. Naturally.

SE: Oh, yes. You just had to tip the bar tender.

MP: Or the floor bosses had tickets with their name on them, and they would buy you drinks with those tickets.

SE: We also got tickets with our check that were good for a drink.

RK: The floor bosses' tickets were on a little book. There were three of them in a row, and they used to just tear those off and give them to the bartender.

MP: Also, we used to be able to just look over and holler at the bosses, and they'd say, "OK." Or they'd come around the bar and drink with you.

DK: A lot of people used to go in Room 25, that little bar there. What was it called?

RK: They used to call it the Music Room Bar.

SE: Remember the Sierra Turf Club? Everybody went there on their breaks.

RK: We used to go over there and have pastrami sandwiches. They used to have the best corned beef and pastrami sandwiches.

MP: A lot of people will remember this: Harolds Club, across the alley, had a children's theater. And when you came downtown, you could take your kids there and leave them there while you gambled in Harolds Club.

BG: I spent the first part of my life in that little theater.

SE: And some people wouldn't pick their kids up. The theater would have to start calling and paging the parents.

RK: We had the rec room across the alley, also. They used to have vinegar and honey mixed. What was that drink?

SE: It was some kind of concoction that Pappy thought was so good for you, and it was brown sugar and vinegar.

The Arch drugstore was another great place that we went to on our breaks.

BG: Yes, they had great grilled bacon, tomato, and cheese sandwiches.

SE: Oh, and wasn't that a neat drug store? You don't see drugstores like that now. It had everything. And it was open twenty four hours a day.

MP: I used to look forward to going to work. It was fun.

BG: Oh, I had so much fun at work.

MP: I couldn't wait.

BG: Once I learned to deal, and I wasn't scared to death anymore, it was great.

RK: Right. I think that was true of all of us.

MP: I could not wait to get there and deal, and I looked forward to seeing the customers that would come back year after year. You'd see the same ones.

RK: And everybody was friends. It didn't seem like anybody was ever arguing or fighting, and if somebody was sick, you'd take up collections for them, or if they were going to have a baby, you would take up collections for them. Everybody just took care of everybody, and everybody was nice to everybody.

MP: When I was pregnant, they let me sit down on a stool and deal. I made lots of tokes because I would tell the customers, "My baby needs new shoes."

[group laughter]

MP: I didn't want to ever quit and have this baby. I thought I'd go back to work with a pillow.

[group laughter]

MP: They announced it over the intercom when my daughter was born.

SE: People where I work now don't believe this, because I complain about working two days, and I can't wait to get my five days off. And when I say this about Harolds Club, they can't relate. At Harolds I didn't want my days off. I wanted to work seven days. It was so much fun.

WE: Remember we had the buttons on the floor to call either the cocktail wait ress or the keno runner?

WE: Yes, and there was one for security or the floor men. One time the button got stuck.

[group laughter]

WE: And I looked up, and there were more security guards than you've ever seen in your life. Joe Kashmiri was one of them. And they were right there, imme diately. Nobody ever bothered us. They were wonderful.

BG: The security got there so much faster than they do today.

RK: Another thing they had were hy draulic tables. They were tables that you could raise or lower by pushing a lever with your foot. You'd go in there, and most of the time, you would say, "Going down!" and push the lever and you would go down, or, "Going up!" and the table would go up. But if there was some body there that was really drunk and obnoxious, you wouldn't even tell them. You'd just go in there and hit that but ton, and go *"Boom!"*

[group laughter]

RK: It would just drop down like that. And I used to love that. I thought it was so funny. [laughter]

SE: Why did they do away with that?

DK: I have no idea.

BG: Because of people like Rose.

[group laughter]

SE: Too many people were getting whiplashes. They had to give it up.

BG: They couldn't afford the insurance.

[group laughter]

DK: But if you guys had a live one, you'd say, "Oh, I'm very sorry. I would like to move the table up if it doesn't bother you."

[group laughter]

SE: Or we'd say, "If you're comfortable, I'll deal like this."

MP: Or, "Where would you like to have the table?"

RK: What was so wonderful was you could put the table at the exact height you wanted it.

SE: There isn't a table today that can do that.

MP: Yes, and today some of the tables are so big, I have to say, "Could you hand me your cards?"

[group laughter]

MP: I can't reach them.

BG: Harolds Club had some really clever things going on down there before any body else had ever thought of them.

BG: They're just now starting to do some things in casinos that Pappy was doing years ago.

WE: One time at Harolds Club this was on the second floor I had this really obnoxious man sitting at the table. It was

before they had the railing around the edge of the table. And he was really obnoxious. We still had the silver dollars, and he had about 400 silver dollars, would not take anything else. They brought me a fill several times. He had all these stacks of silver dollars, and he was just really ornery. I was getting mad der and madder, so finally, I just gave the table a little nudge. [laughter] There were silver dollars everywhere. I was so happy to see him down there picking up all that money.

MP: I told a customer once, when he had a bunch of silver dollars, that "We're not allowed to cash them in unless you split with me."

SE: That was a good line.

MP: I went to nursing school while I was working at Harolds Club, and I took my test and had my degree and continued to work at Harolds Club. They money was that good. And if Harolds Club had stayed open, I may not have gone into nursing. I didn't start nursing until after Howard Hughes had bought it, and he took it over.

DK: Do you keep your own tokes at the Silver Legacy, Sally?

SE: No, but the El Dorado they keep their own.

WE: We share at Bonanza.

DK: And the Sundowner?

RK: They keep their own.

DK: And the Peppermill, Bonnie, do they split?

BG: They split.

DK: When you kids were dealing at Harolds Club, did anybody ever come back early from their break when you had someone on your table that was giv ing you money, or did they come back late if you had stiff customers? Did that ever happen to you, Meri?

MP: Yes, it did. And it only happened to me a couple of times. [laughter] After that, I said, "Oh, no," or I'd say, "Now, don't come back early, because I'm not leaving." You had a lot of dealers that had been there a long time, and when you were new, they'd be a little pushy about that. They were there to make the money like all of us, and so instead of having a twenty minute break, they'd come back after ten or fifteen minutes, or they'd say, "Go ahead and take a long break."

DK: Did that happen to you, Sally, at Harolds Club?

SE: You know, I don't really remember that. I can remember an incident, and this is when I was on the quarter table right next to the floor manager's office. I remember this happening once: some one tried to cheat, and they grabbed him and took him in that office. And I heard him yelling in there.

RK: Who took him in there?

SE: Some security and, I think, a couple of bosses. I can't remember who. But, I mean, he was screaming, you know, like you see in the movies?

[group laughter]

SE: I don't know what he did.
And then I remember another time on the second floor, a guy, he was so drunk,

he tried to cheat by sticking a card in his pocket. And, of course, he missed.

[group laughter]

SE: And I don't know what they did with him, but I still remember that in the bosses' office, because it was right close to me. I could hear them, and they're like banging, and I thought, "Oh, my God!"

MP: [laughter] Slapping him around.

SE: Just like that movie *Casino*. I don't know if you ever saw that.

MP: Yes. But you know, I'd rather have the mob run the casinos than the corpo rations.

SE: Well, the corporations don't know how to run them, for one thing.

MP: I mean, all you had to do with the mob is not cheat them. And you could make your tips or whatever as long as you weren't stealing from them.

[group laughter]

MP: Oh, but these corporations today, it's terrible. You're just a number there. You know, "Did 006665 show up?" It's just . . . it's awful.

DK: You ask for a day off, and they want to know your number.

SE: Yes! "What number are you? You had a day off last week."

RK: Remember when dealers used to go around and give you smoke breaks? They would have too many dealers that night, so they used to say, "Oh, girls, go run some smoke breaks." So you'd go to wherever your friends were and say, "Do you want a smoke break?" And most of the time when you did that, you would look to make sure they didn't have some body really live.

MP: The club had cigarettes on the table for the customers.

SE: I swear, those cigarettes were from World War II.

DK: The cigarettes were laying right on the table.

MP: Yes, in boxes on the table.

RK: When we first went to work there, a cocktail waitress would come around and ask you what kind of cigarettes you smoked. Whether you smoked or not, you'd take a pack of cigarettes, be cause you were supposed to have them for your customers.

They used to ask you, "What kind do you want tonight?" and then you'd put them in your drawer, although you sel dom ever gave them to any of the cus tomers. If you knew somebody that smoked, you'd give it to them, or to your husband, or whoever.

RK: After they quit doing that, then they put those little black boxes on the table, and the cocktail waitresses would come around and fill up those boxes. Remem ber, you used to push on that box, and one would pop out.

SE: The bums used to lift up the back of the box and grab them all out. I used to let them take them.

BG: I didn't care.

WE: I didn't smoke, so it didn't matter to me.

SE: Boy, now that's a luxury. We've got cigarette girls in our place. There's no cigarette machines in the whole place, because selling cigarettes is this girl's business. You can't buy them in the gift shop anywhere because the club has these girls that go around and say, "Ci gars, cigarettes." They're like four dollars a pack. [laughter]

DK: Do you remember if the drinks were free at your table, or if the customers had to buy them?

MP: I remember. They were free.

BG: Oh, they were free.

RK: The customers had to buy them.

BG: They did?

RK: Yes, because I remember having live customers on my table.

SE: Live? Not dead?

[group laughter]

RK: I mean, they were live to me. They were toking me, so they were live. They were tipping me, and I would say, "Could you please get them their drink?" And I remember one little waitress, her name was Audrey, and her husband was a bar manager, Rob. She would come around and say, "Why should I go get them a free drink? I'm not making any money."

And I would say, "Would you please go ask a floor boss to buy their drinks?" So, she would have to go to a floor boss to get a free drink ticket. Otherwise, they used to charge them for every drink on the table. They never got them free.

SE: I remember toward the end of Harolds Club, if you bet a certain amount, your drink was free. I think you had to bet at least five dollars to get it free.

DK: Do you remember this? Some of you used to ring a little short bell for a floor man, and you'd say, "Oh, I've got some really good players on this table. Can you buy them a drink?"

RK: Yes, yes. I remember that.

DK: And then the floor man would tear off his tickets and lay the tickets on the table, and then you'd ring the bell for the cocktail waitress.

RK: Right. I remember doing that.

DK: So, the drinks weren't all free.

RK: No, they weren't.

SE: Who dealt all the high limit games at the Harolds Club? The floor men's wives.

RK: Not all of the wives. I never did. In fact, one night, I was dealing number twenty four twenty one, up front by the air curtain. And Jerry Sicka came up and said, "Rose, one of the dealers on the high limit tables is sick." He says, "Go back there and take her out."

And I said, "Oh, Jerry," I said, "you better go check that with Dwayne." I said, "He's not going to like that."

And he says, "Rose, would you just go do it? She's sick. She needs to go."

And I thought, "Oh, my gosh! I'm going to go deal a high limit table?" I mean, they never put me on high limit.

DK: Jerry Sicka and I never put our wives on a high limit table. His wife, Glenda, never dealt high limit.

RK: I hadn't dealt that long, either, so I probably shouldn't have been on them, but I remember going back there, and who should come in to play but Joe Conforte.

I was scared to death, and I remember a boss came over and stood behind me, because Conforte told me if ever my dealing occupation didn't pan out, that he could get me a job.

[group laughter]

RK: I was so embarrassed, I thought I would die. I was scared to death of him, but he toked me real well.

SE: He used to come in there, and he'd bring all those young girls like sixteen, eighteen years old. And they finally got on him and said, "I'm sorry, but the girls have to be twenty one." I mean, they were like the girl of the week, and then sometimes the whole string of them would be with him.

MP: He was in there a lot. I remember one time I was with Conrad Price, my husband at that time, and we had our daughters with us. And Joe came over and said, "Oh, hi, Conrad," and was talking with us. And he said, "Oh, and these are your girls?"

Conrad said, "Yes, and you stay away from them."

[group laughter]

SE: Because he liked them young.

MP: Yes, he really did. But Joe was always nice. He always treated everyone with respect.

SE: Well, I say he did a lot for Reno. He did a lot of good. He always helped people, always gave turkeys away at Thanksgiving.

WE: Yes, I thought that was awfully nice.

MP: I think prostitution should be legal. Why not get taxes or something for your community?

DK: We haven't talked about the seventh floor entertainment. Do you want to talk about that, Bonnie?

BG: Oh! We saw everybody up there, didn't we?

RK: Yes. And we used to go after we would get off work. There used to be a late show, and we could go up there.

DK: Who was the maitre d'?

BG: Bill Everhart. Yes, that's who it was. And we all got in free. Your husband would come down to meet you after work, and you'd go up there, and Bill would let you right in. You'd give him a little money, and he'd put you right up front.

BG: And the cocktail waitresses up there were knockouts. They were all gorgeous.

RK: They were all cute, and we always used to get free drinks up there.

I can remember seeing the Christy Minstrels real late when I would get off work. When they had Jack Bedient and the Chessmen, we used to go up there, and I used to love to work up on the seventh floor when they were playing.

MP: I did too. I liked working up there.

BG: All the people that worked there, they just loved it when you stayed and drank, and everybody would come over

and say hello and buy drinks for you, and they encouraged you to gamble and stay around.

MP: You know, another really neat thing at Harolds Club was when they had the Gun Club, and you were picked to go out and deal at the Gun Club. That was a real honor. I only got to do it once.

DK: Who was your floor manager out there? Do you remember?

MP: I think it was you.

RK: Didn't you used to go there, and before you, wasn't it Glen Botorff?

DK: Yes, I ran the Gun Club gambling about four years.

MP: But I only went one time, and that was so exciting. I felt, "I get to go to the Gun Club!"

DK: What was so exciting about it?

MP: Well, it was kind of an honor to get to . . . because only special people were picked to go out there. Well, I thought it was a neat thing to do, and I only got to do it once. I don't know what made it so special.

SE: They did have high rollers, and when you went to work, you worked un til it closed. It was at least twelve hours a day.

MP: I made several hundred dollars in tokes out there.

SE: Yes, they were the high rollers, the shooters.

MP: Yes, it was really neat. I go out that way a lot to see patients that live in Span ish Springs, and I look over there and think, "Oh, God." It's all run down. I don't know what they're doing with it.

DK: Bonnie, you said earlier that Pappy came around and gave you two hun dred dollars bonus for Christmas. Did he give it to you in cash or checks?

BG: Cash. I remember crying, because I hadn't even worked there a year, and that was so much money! You know, that made our Christmas. I was dealing on a game by the cashier's cage. I'll never forget it.

DK: A little earlier, we were talking about working five or six nights a week, and then getting a night off. Where would you go on your night off?

SE: Harolds Club.

RK: Silver Dollar Bar.

[group laughter]

MP: We'd go back to Harolds Club's Sil ver Dollar Bar and drink.

RK: Actually, a lot of times, you would go out to the Lancer for dinner, or you would go to Eugene's for dinner, but you would always end up at Harolds Club to have a couple of drinks.

SE: And try to make your friends money.

MP: Yes, gamble and bet for your friends.

SE: And all the bartenders, you'd tip them after work, and then on their night off, they'd come in and play on your game and tip you.

MP: Yes, right.

RK: And often times you would go back to Harolds Club just because you had so much fun there, even on your nights off.

DK: I recall so many times towards the end of the evening, you'd say, "Well, let's go down to Harolds Club."

WE: Yes. The last stop before you went home.

SE: Well, there's always something go ing on.

MP: And it was *the* place to be. It was *the* place to work.

SE: For a long time, that was *the* job.

BG: If you worked at Harolds Club, ev erybody wanted to know about Harolds Club.

MP: And the clothes that we wore, the beautiful Western clothes, Western pants and blouses. It was just *the* place.

RK: Well, that is interesting too, because they used to have a wardrobe. And when you first went to work there, they said, "You have to buy at least one pair of pants, and the cost will come out of your earnings."

RK: And so that way, you could be dressed nice and be able to come to work right away.

And they'd have you get five blouses. I remember going to wardrobe before I came on change, and I got a pair of Western pants and five blouses.

MP: Those cotton, cotton blouses.

RK: Yes. One was like a light green, and one was like a light lavender, and one was a pink, and they were all nice.

MP: I wore cowboy boots, and they were so comfortable.

WE: Yes, they were wonderful.

MP: They were *really* nice to walk in.

RK: Then later on, after you worked there for a while, you could either go in and buy more clothes in the wardrobe, or else you could go to any one of the Western stores.

BG: Parker's Western Wear was great.

RK: If you worked in Harolds Club, you got a discount at Parker's.

SE: And the D Bar M, we used to go in there, too.

DK: I've heard some girls spent hun dreds or thousands of dollars on their outfits.

MP: Yes, I know several that did.

RK: And our aprons were always made out of the green felt from the old twenty one layouts.

WE: That's where mine came from. I have two of them.

DK: And that's the only aprons you were allowed to wear. Is that right?

RK: I don't know, but we always had those green ones, always. I remember the first time we got to wear a green apron and go to work. Oh! I thought I was so wonderful.

BG: Oh, we thought we were hot.

RK: We thought we were cute.

[group laughter]

RK: Little green aprons on. "We're dealers now!"

SE: We didn't have to put on that five hundred pound change apron.

RK: We didn't have to carry around change, right.

DK: Well, I've heard that some of those kids, when they got off of change, would put on their apron and walk all over town in different clubs just so that people would know they were a dealer.

MP: Oh, yes, that was a big deal, to be a dealer.

BG: Sure. That was us, wasn't it?

SE: That must have been us.

RK: It probably was. That was probably us.

MP: Yes, you were the *in* person when you were a dealer at Harolds Club.

BG: I can remember my parents were so proud of me because I worked at Harolds Club.

DK: Were your parents local people?

BG: Yes, they lived here all their lives.

SE: My parents were just the opposite.

WE: Mine were the opposite, too.

SE: They thought I was being sinful.

BG: Oh, no, mine thought it was wonderful, because we were making great money.

SE: When mine came and visited, and they saw there were regular people working there, just people trying to earn a living, they thought it was OK.

DK: Where were your parents from?

SE: Sacramento, but they had never been up here.

DK: So you were embarrassed or hesitant to tell them?

SE: Yes, but I think once they started visiting, it was different.

DK: Well, how about you, Willie?

WE: Oh, my father was really upset. I was an only girl in the family, and he lived in the Bay Area. Of course, he thought it was terrible. He thought a blackjack dealer was terrible.

SE: Yes, it's almost like saying a dance hall girl or something.

WE: Yes. Right. A floozie.

MP: In fact, when I first came to Reno, I had gotten divorced, and my ex husband tried to take my kids away from me, because I was working in a casino. And I was in gambling, a dealer and a bad mother and a prostitute. He took me to court because I was living in Reno.

WE: And at that time, that probably almost worked.

BG: See, I'm naive, because I didn't hear that.

SE: Well, you were raised here, right? And your folks are from here?

BG: Yes.

SE: So, see, that was different.

BG: Yes, I spent my childhood in the children's theater. Any time anybody came to Reno, they took a ride to Harolds Club, and the kids all stayed in the children's theater. We traveled a lot be cause my husband's family lived in Penn sylvania. And every time we'd go back, we'd take rolls of silver dollars. And we'd give them out to all the kids, and they just were fascinated with them.

MP: Yes, I would always give them out. I remember going to Hawaii with Jane Cash, and we took a whole bunch of sil ver dollars and gave them out as tips over there in Hawaii, because they never saw silver dollars.

DK: All of you were at Harolds Club when it was sold to the Howard Hughes corporation so I'll ask you each individu ally. What were the differences you noted when the club was sold?

MP: Well, we had to split our tips.

[group laughter]

MP: The rules were a lot stricter, and it wasn't laid back, and you couldn't be friendly to the customers. I thought it was terrible. I really hated it.

DK: How about you, Sally?

SE: Well, I remember they brought in a lot of Vegas bosses. And that was a big difference. It was going to be their way.

DK: Did you leave Harolds Club shortly after the sale?

SE: No. I left in 1974 after I had my last child.

DK: How about you, Willie? What did you notice most when the club changed hands?

WE: It was all different. Jessie Beck had bought the Riverside by then, and Mary Beth Clark kept saying, "Come down to the Riverside. Everyone from Harolds Club is working for Jessie Beck." So I finally re lented after about three months, and I went down to work for Jessie. And it was nice like Harolds Club was. It was a real friendly, nice Of course, we had all the same customers, too, so it was like Harolds Club. But there will never be an other Harolds Club. It's just a shame that they closed.

DK: How about you, Rose? Do you re member when it was sold?

RK: Yes, and I guess the biggest thing that I noticed was that they fired all the floor managers' wives. That was one of the things they did.

First they put us on different shifts. I think they thought that a lot of us would quit because they had put us on differ ent shifts, but when that didn't work, then they decided just to fire us all. I guess they thought, being from Vegas, there had to be something going on, that we were somehow or another cheating the club and were in cahoots with our husbands

to steal money. So, anyway, they let all the floor bosses' wives go.

DK: So that was the end of your career in Harolds Club?

RK: That was the end of my career in Harolds Club.

DK: How about you, Bonnie?

BG: That's exactly the thing I remember the most, because you guys were my friends, and I remember that they split you up. First they brought all their people in and let our guys train them and tell them everything. But they lied. You know, they just lied. They flat lied. They said, "Oh, everything's going to be the same." You know, "Nothing's going to change. It's going to be wonderful." As soon as they got all their people trained, they changed everything.

DK: Did you stay there for any length of time?

BG: What year did they take over?

DK: They bought it in June of 1970, and they really started taking more control in early 1971.

BG: I think I left right after that. And then I didn't go back until 1980. I was off work for seven years.

MP: You know, I've been in nursing now for probably thirty years, and I have closer friends that are dealers from all those years ago than I do with nurses. I don't know if it's the camaraderie that we had when we got off work, and we had a drink and could talk. Whereas in nursing, you get off; you certainly don't hang around the hospital. And what do you talk about, you know? Who died, or who is in surgery? [laughter] You know, what you did that day, so you just kind of take off and get out of there. But it's amazing, the different life style. I have some nursing friends, but, I have kept my dealer friends for many, many years.

DK: Well, it's a good example of the group here today. You originally met each other over thirty years ago and still stay in contact, to a degree.

RK: We'll go a few years without seeing one another, but I usually always see Sally at the Christmas parties. And, once in a while, if we ever get into the Peppermill, we see Bonnie.

BG: Well, the only problem with casinos is that you don't have the same days off as your friends.

SE: Yes, or shifts, even.

BG: You don't have the same shift, or you work in a different casino. And that's the only thing. But I do have a lot of close friends that I met in the clubs.

RK: Yes. I think they're always there if you need them to be there, because I know I hadn't seen you for a long, long time, and you were going in the hospi tal, and I can remember going over and getting your clothes and doing your laun dry and bringing it back to you. I mean, your friends, if you need them, they're there.

SE: Well, I think you two were friends. You were good friends.

RK: Yes, and I used to sit and talk with you quite a bit too, Sally. And Meri and I spent a lot of time together, too.

WE: I think, even though we don't see each other every day, we just pick up where we left off, when we do see each other. We just pick up where we left off, and the friendship is still there.

DK: And if somebody says Harolds Club, it's automatic that you want to be with them, or that you have something in common.

MP: It's like a sorority.

SE: That's why I look forward so much to the Christmas party. It's almost like we've gone back in time, and we're still working.

DK: The Christmas party you're talking about is the party that a group of former Harolds Club employees have every year at Christmas time. They all worked at Harolds Club in the good old days.

MP: Yes. And it's like when we were all young and cute and wore our little tight Western clothes. [laughter] That's how we see and remember people, and it's kind of neat.

Note

1. An EO is an "early out," which means going home before your shift is completed.

GLOSSARY

box, *v.* To monitor and directly supervise all the activity on a dice game.

box man, *n.* An employee who observes a dice game, making sure that the payoffs are correct and that nobody takes advantage of the house.

cap it, *v.* Put a device over the coin acceptor so that a slot machine couldn't be played.

change apron, *n.* A casino employee who would carry around a large amount of change in an apron so that customers would not have to leave their machines to get coins from the cashier.

check, *n.* A chip; a counter used at table games to represent money.

catwalk, *n.* An area in a ceiling, usually concealed by one-way mirrors through which security could observe the actions of employees and customers.

chuck-a-luck, *n.* A unique dice game where the object is to tumble three dice in a cage and then wager on how they will land once the cage comes to a rest. There are four types of bets possible: numbers bets, field bets, over-ten bets, and under-eleven bets.

crossroader, *n.* A cheating customer.

drop box, *n.* The container attached to the underside of a playing table, into which money is deposited by the dealer through a slot in the table.

flat bet, *n.* An even money bet.

going south, *v.* Stealing.

hard way, *n.* *See: Props.*

key man, *n.* A person working on the casino floor who performs minor repairs on slot machines and in some cases pays jackpots.

layout, *n.* The cloth covering on a gambling table with different patterns for each type of game.

one-roll, *adj.* *See: Props.*

pat, *adj.* (Twenty-one, draw poker) The holder of a "pat" hand will play those cards without a hit or draw.

p. c., *n.* Percentage, as in the average percentage of money played that is kept by the house.

place bet, *n.* (Craps) A bet consisting of one unit at even money plus additional units at true odds. The first dollar bet pays even money; the additional dollars pay out at true odds.

press, *v.* Add to a bet.

props, *n.* Proposition bets. In craps, one-roll bets or bets on the "hard ways" (i.e., on numbers 4, 6, 8, and 10).

read, *v.* Count the money in the tray or rack of a twenty-one or dice table.

rounder, *n.* A person who goes around from casino to casino, drinking and/or gambling.

soft money, *n.* Paper currency.

stiff, *adj.* (Twenty-one) A "stiff" hand totals twelve or more.

sub (submarine), *n.* A pocket-like piece of cloth worn under a dishonest dealer's pants or skirt. The dealer would slip chips or tokens into the sub.

toke, *n.* A gratuity, a tip.

way, *n.* (Keno) A separate bet on a ticket with more than one bet.

Photograph Credits

ii Twyila Smith Whear; Laura June Smith Barnes; Charles Clifford

iii Dwayne Kling; Neal Cobb; Fitzgerald's Group

4 Diane Smith

7 Charles Clifford

9 Laura June Smith Barnes

11 Charles Clifford

12 Nevada Historical Society, Neal Cobb Collection

16 Nevada Historical Society, Neal Cobb Collection

17 George Smith; Darl Voss

24 Laura June Smith Barnes

27 Nevada Historical Society, Neal Cobb Collection

28 Laura June Smith Barnes

29 Fitzgerald's Group

30 Fitzgerald's Group; Diane Smith

34 Phyllis Smith

35 Phyllis Smith

36 Phyllis Smith

42 Twyila Smith Whear

46 Twyila Smith Whear

48 Neal Cobb

49 Neal Cobb

52 Twyila Smith Whear

53 Madalyn Hogan

61 Charles Clifford

63 Fitzgerald's Group

64 Harry Bergmann

73 Fitzgerald's Group

75 David Cable

76 Fitzgerald's Group

78 Fitzgerald's Group

80 Dwayne Kling

82 Chris Beck

83 Fitzgerald's Group

85 Fitzgerald's Group

87 Charles Clifford

90 Fitzgerald's Group

94 Marguerite Kerr

98 Nevada Historical Society, Neal Cobb Collection

102 Fitzgerald's Group

103 Fitzgerald's Group

104 Marguerite Kerr

107 Dwayne Kling

110 Dwayne Kling

114 Dwayne Kling

115 Fitzgerald's Group

120 Twyila Smith Whear

124 Fitzgerald's Group

127 Fitzgerald's Group

129 Fitzgerald's Group

131 Fitzgerald's Group

137 Nevada Historical Society, Les Kofoed Collection

140 Dwayne Kling; Al Lazzarone

141 Al Lazzarone

149 Dan Orlich

153 Fitzgerald's Group

154 Rosalie Beasley

156 Dan Orlich

161 Fitzgerald's Group

162 Dwayne Kling

165 Roy Powers

167 Roy Powers

168 Fitzgerald's Group

169 Fitzgerald's Group (Columbia Pictures photograph)

172 Roy Powers

174 Fitzgerald's Group

178 Fitzgerald's Group

180 Dwayne Kling

182 Fitzgerald's Group

183 William Salas

186 Fitzgerald's Group

190 Jack Streeter

196 Darl Voss

198 Dwayne Kling; Fitzgerald's Group

199 Fitzgerald's Group (Don Dondero photograph)

200 Dwayne Kling

201 Dwayne Kling

203 Darl Voss

205 Neal Cobb

206 Fitzgerald's Group

209 Fitzgerald's Group

211 Dwayne Kling

220 Pat Applewhite; Rosalie Beasley; Mary Bletcher; Dwayne Kling; Madalyn Hogan; Dwayne Kling; Marjorie Voss; Jean Pinkerton; Dorothy Whitton-Canby

222 Dwayne Kling

250 Cleo Chiatovich; Marjorie Voss; Arline Johnston Harper; Marcia Schwarz; Dwayne Kling; Marjorie and Darl Voss

288 Sally Ennes; Pat Applewhite; Dwayne Kling; Bonnie Matthews; Meri Price

INDEX

A

Abner, Alan, 165
Adams, Eva, 134
Adams, Ken, 108
All-American Society, 50, 135
Allen, Jud, 50-52, 171
Alouia, Art, 188
Anderson, Smokey, 87, 197
Applewhite, Pat, 219-247
Arch Lounge (Harolds Club, Reno), 65, 70
Archuletta, Frank, 139
Armstrong, Louis, 163, 268
Ascuaga, John, 160

B

Badie, Leroy, 229, 267
Baker, Emma Belle, 33-34
Bal Tabarin (Lake Tahoe), 4
Balkanny, Richard, 158
Ball, Lyle, 163
Bank Club (Reno, Nevada), 189, 201-202
Baring, Walter S., 50, 65
Barlow, Betty, 237, 258, 277
Barnes, Laura June (née Smith), 6, 9, 23-31, 38, 298-299
Barnett, George, 126-128
Beasley, Rosalie, 219-247
Beck, Charles, 82
Beck Corporation, 188, 191-192, 197, 200
Beck, Fred, 18-19, 179-180, 200-201, 256
Beck, Jessie, 18, 86, 91, 179-180, 183, 185, 188, 191, 200-201, 214, 221, 223, 226, 235, 246, 249, 251, 255-256, 309
Beck, Ruth, 256
Becker, John, 168
Bedient, Jack, 299, 305
Bell, Rex, 149
Bergmann, Harry, 57-66, 293
Bettencourt, John, 199
"Big Ramona," 230
Bishop Manogue High School (Reno, Nevada), 5, 15, 26-27, 98, 173, 203
Blake, Bob, 69
Blake, Ethel, 34, 69, 148, 242
Bletcher, Bill, 234
Bletcher, Lowell, 265
Bletcher, Mary, 219-247
Botorff, Faye, 246
Botorff, Glen, 60, 86, 208, 246, 256, 289, 306
Bowen, Grant, 193
Bowker, Ryal "Lucky Pierre," 165-166
Boyd, Sam, 190
Boyer, Ken, 143
Bristol, Dick, 59
Bristol, Heck, 59, 209
Brown, Clark, 201, 246, 256-257
Brown, Joanie, 38
Brown, John E., 18, 180-181, 184
Brown, Margaret, 219-247
Brown, Norm, 38
Brown, Pat, 104
Bunton, Tommy, 226
Burke, Don, 171
Burke, Harry, 256, 283
Burns, Bobby, 163

C

Cable, David, 67-76
Cable, Patti, 67, 71
Calloway, Cab, 268
Camp Pendleton, California, 99
Cardella, Lou, 89, 201
Carpenter, Betty, 79
Carpenter, Curly, 145
Carpenter, Earl, 289-290
Cash, Jane, 309
Catholic Register (Reno, Nevada), 97
Caudle, George, 232, 235-236
Cavallaro, Carmen, 103, 153
Chanin, Wolfram, 276
Chapman, Ed "Chappie," 79
Characters, 152
Chase, Frank, 60
Chiatovich, Cleo Della Quadri, 249-285
Christensen, Roy, 188
Circus Circus Hotel Casino (Reno, Nevada), 82
Cirves, Phil, 45, 71

Clark, Mary Beth, 309
Clark, Petula, 152, 163
Clearwater, Florida, 167
Clifford, Charles, 77-91
Clifford, Eslie, 31, 77
Clooney, Rosemary, 163
Close, Hazel, 177
Club Cal-Neva (Reno, Nevada), 37, 39
Cogswell, Freddie, 143
Cohen, Carl, 157
Columbia Studios, 168-169
Conforte, Joe, 106-107, 252-253, 305
Conner, Roy, 183
Corn, Jay, 91, 145, 158
Cornell, Don, 163
Cosmo Club (Reno, Nevada), 268
Cotter, Irma, 103
Covered Wagon Room (Harolds Club, Reno), 77, 171, 204
Cox, Walter, 135
Crawford, Lee, 45, 79, 83
Creewood Gift Shop (Reno, Nevada), 254
Cripes, Dick, 180, 183
Cross, Sherry, 166
Curtis, Mark, 171

D

Damone, Vic, 163
Daniels, Billy, 269
Davis, Beverly, 79
Davis, Fred, 171
Davis, Sammy, 268
Davis, Tom, 38, 86, 143, 256, 276
Davis, Yvonne "Todd," 38, 249-285
De Maris, Warren, 180
De Weese, Gayle, 274
Debus, Paul, 153
Del Webb Corporation, 117, 191-192
Della Quadri, Mr., 255-256
Derrivan, Steve, 236, 289
Devers, Joe, 63, 256, 260
DeWitt, Eleanor, 272
Dill, Ruth. *See: Jones, Ruth*
Dion, Mel, 86
Diskin, Mike, 189
Dixon, Don, 58
Dodson, Bob, 197
Doty, Gene, 287
Douglass, Jack, 37

E

Eagle Valley Home for Children (Carson City, Nevada), 163
Eamigh, Frankie, 142
Einstoss, Bernie, 4, 155, 270, 273-275
Einstoss, Patty, 4
Elliott, Betty, 262
Ennes, Sally, 287-311
Ethridge, John, 38
Ethridge, Tanya, 38
Eugene's (Reno, Nevada), 285
Evans, Gene, 171
Evans, Wilma "Willie," 287-311
Everhart, Bill, 305

F

Fagetan, Cornel, 86
Fair, Irwin, 100
Feretto, Helen, 151-152, 156
Ferrari, Al, 265
Five Against the House, 168-169
Fitzgerald, Lincoln, 131
Fontaine, Joe, 88
Forest, Helen, 101
Fort Smith (Harolds Club, Reno), 277-278
Frias, Myrna, 45
Frias, Tommy, 45, 71
Frost, Harry, 193
Fuller, Ruth, 200, 235
Fun Room (Harolds Club, Reno), 153, 162-163, 173

G

Galena High School (Reno, Nevada), 51
Gaming Industry Association of Nevada, 64, 137
Garnett, Hazel, 79
George, Johnny, 72
Gepford, Charlie, 192
Gerow, Dr., 192
Gillette, Clint, 274
Ginsburg, Sam, 194
Golden Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 65, 97, 232, 269
Green Bay Packers, 147
Gribble, Winnie, 108
Griffith, Phil, 214, 245
Grisham, Edith, 210, 226
Gruber, Dwala (Horton), 65

H

Hall, Tish, 197
Halley, Jack, 189
Haney, Les, 139-140
Harolds Club Pioneers, 52-53, 234
Harolds Club scholarships, 50-51, 132, 135, 203-204
Harolds Club Softball Team, 139-141
Harolds Club Transcontinental Trophy Dash, 167
Harolds Gun Club, 6, 15, 18, 116-117, 142, 148-149, 207-208, 258-261, 275, 306

Harolds *Herald*, 160
Harper, Arline Johnston, 249-285
Harrah, Scherry, 141, 227
Harrah, William F., 8, 123, 131-132, 144, 154, 227
Harrah's Club (Lake Tahoe), 280
Harrah's Club (Reno, Nevada), 65, 89, 97, 105, 108, 111, 113, 131, 133, 137, 144, 145, 154, 166, 170-171, 173, 193, 241, 263, 292
Harry James Band, 163
Harvey's Wagon Wheel (Lake Tahoe), 203
Harwood, Roy, 180, 183
Hefler, Muriel, 79
Heiser, John, 192
Herz, Jim, 95
Hill, Danny, 38, 76
Hilton, Conrad, 65
Hobson, Pick, 196
Hogan, Bill, 255
Hogan, Midge, 219-247
Hopkinson, Fred, 214
Horseshoe Club (Reno, Nevada), 168
Howard, Jessie. *See: Beck, Jessie*
Howland, Buddy, 223-224
Hoyt, Bessie, 211, 242
Hughes, Dave, 85
Hughes, Howard, 12, 19, 21, 29, 90-91, 117, 144, 154, 157, 185, 188, 191-192, 200, 213-214, 265
Hunter, Bob, 260
Hunter, Jim, 74, 86, 103, 113, 134, 142-143, 147-148, 150, 154, 157, 196, 207-208, 222, 231, 236-238, 251-252, 260
Hutchins, Elsie "Dodie," 45
Hutchins, Mark, 45

J

Jackson, Joe, 188
Jodimars, 101
Johnson, Lady Bird, 164
Johnson, Lyndon B., 189, 269
Johnson, Shirley, 160
Jones, Keith, 86
Jones, Louise, 219-247
Jones, Ruth, 223-224
Jordan, J.C., 145
Jordan, Oakley, 173

K

Kashmiri, Joe, 301
Keith, Brian, 168-169
Kennedy, John F., 94, 103-104, 232, 269
Kerr, George, 16, 93-104
Kestle, Dick, 167
Kimpton, Laverl, 60, 85-86
Kiner, Phil, 149
King, Joe, 168
Klaich, Bob, 18-19, 62-63, 157-158
Kline, Paula, 242-243, 270
Kling, Connie, 106, 111
Kling, Dwayne, 105-117
Kling, Eugenia, 106, 109, 112
Kling, Michelle, 111
Kling, Rose, 111-112, 117, 287-311
Kofoed, Frances, 120
Kofoed, Leslie S., 64, 119-137, 159

L

La Voy, Louie, 95
Landucci, Augi, 180, 184, 188
Lazzarone, Al, 139-145, 234
Lazzarone, Dorothy, 140, 142
Lee, Richard, 171
Lent, Guy, 122, 124, 137, 150, 159, 169, 172, 175
Liberace, 291
Lindeman, Duke, 148
Lindeman, Ruth, 200, 235
Lombardi, Louis, 6
Lombardi, Mrs. Louis, 6
Lopez, Trini, 152
Lund, Annie, 224, 235

M

Madison, Guy, 168-169
Maheu, Robert, 157, 192
Manzelli, Arleta, 230-231
Manzelli, Frank, 143, 231
Mapes, Charles, 160, 260
Mapes, Gloria, 260
Mapes Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 63, 254
Marino, Esther, 34, 57, 60, 63, 251-252
Mastroianni, Joe, 120, 122
Matheson, Swede, 101
Mathis, Ruby, 273-274
Matthews, Bonnie Good, 287-311
Mattson, Gene, 188
Maushardt, Norman, 70, 256
Maxwell, Barbara, 112-113
Maxwell, Isabel, 252
McCarran, Patrick A., 134
McClaine, Claire, 65
McDonnel, Don, 86, 89, 106, 155, 202
McFadden, Leo, 97
Meineke, Paul, 100
Mills Brothers, 268-269
Morris, Chester, 3
Mount Wheeler (Nevada), 100
Muncie, Betty Stoddard, 165
Murdock, Jim, 261
Music Corporation of America, 163

Music Room (Harolds Club, Reno), 77, 299
Mustang Ranch, 107, 253

N

Nash, Ruby, 219
Neely, Glen, 234
Nelson, Warren, 37, 190
Nerase, Russ, 18
Nevada Club (Reno, Nevada), 125, 181, 267
Nevada Gaming Commission, 126, 188
Nevada State Civil Air Patrol, 94, 102
New China Club (Reno, Nevada), 267-268
New York Yankees, 105, 143
Newhart, Bob, 75
Newton-John, Olivia, 152
Nichols, Tracy, 183
Noble, John Wesley, 136, 170, 240, 270-271
Novack, George, 77
Novak, Kim, 168

O

Ohnstad, Don, 6
Ohnstad, Val, 6
Oldham, Rick, 148
Olham, John, 60
Oliver, Terry, 214
Olympic Games (Winter, 1960), 97, 167, 275-276
Orlich, Dan, 34-35, 38, 58, 61, 63, 86, 113, 148-158, 207, 213, 260, 273-274

P

Page, Max, 214, 245
Parga, Bill, 85, 295
Pattie, Bob, 149
Peeples, Pat, 139-140, 234
Peerce, Jan, 5, 27, 98
Peterson, Herman, 150
Peterson, Lucille Vinson, 219-247
Piazzo, Chet, 18
Piazzo, Link, 18
Pieper, Jack, 19, 145, 157-158
Pigeon Hole Parking Garage, 47-48, 122, 125, 169
Pinkerton, Jean, 219-247
Pons, Lili, 5, 16, 27, 98, 173
Pony Express Motels (Reno and Sparks, Nevada), 116, 119-125, 133, 149
Pope, Bruna, 77-78
Pope, Homer, 57-58, 77, 209
Powers, Jackie, 172
Powers, Roy, 51, 96, 98-99, 101, 133-134, 136, 159-175
Presley, Elvis, 4-5, 12
Price, Conrad, 305
Price, Meri, 287-311
Primm, Evelyn, 260
Pull magazine, 170
Purvis, Joyce Ellen (née Smith), 4
Pyramid Lake (Nevada), 112

Q

Quilici, Hugo, 173

R

Railroad Bar (Harolds Club, Reno), 136
Rauhut, Hugh, 168
Rausch, Lyle, 139
Raymond I. Smith River Walk, 52
Reader, Bill, 235
Redd, Si, 19
Redican, Kevin, 37
Redmond, Jack, 188
Reno Air Races (Reno, Nevada), 99, 166-167
Reno Arch (Reno, Nevada), 174
Reno Balloon Races (Reno, Nevada), 99
Reno Chamber of Commerce (Reno, Nevada), 160-161, 167, 171-172
Reno Gazette-Journal, 166
Reno High School (Reno, Nevada), 41, 45
Reno-Sparks Pioneers, 105
Reno Turf Club (Reno, Nevada), 266
Ricci, Ruggiero, 5, 27, 98
Rice, Gordon W., 189
Riley, Spud, 180-181, 183
Ring, Robert A. Sr., 263
Riordan, Lefty, 141
Ritterscamp, Emily, 255
Ritterscamp, Herb, 255
Riverside Hotel-Casino (Reno, Nevada), 5, 91, 159-160, 188, 214, 246, 256, 269, 309
Roaring Camp Club (Reno, Nevada), 115, 236, 247
Roaring Camp Room (Harolds Club, Reno), 34, 62, 68, 77-78, 115-116, 156, 169, 204, 228, 230-231, 247, 252, 277-278
Room 25 (Harolds Club, Reno), 168, 213, 246, 258, 276-277, 296-297, 299
Roosevelt Hotel (San Francisco, California), 44
Roper, Dale, 241, 256
Rose, Doris, 219
Rose Room (Harolds Club, Reno), 3
Rutherford, Nell, 290

S

Sahati, Eddie, 108, 132, 202-203, 244, 273
Sahati, Nick, 61, 84, 89, 108, 132, 202, 244, 273

Sahati's Stateline Country Club (Lake Tahoe), 203
Saint Mary's Hospital (Reno, Nevada), 5, 50, 95-96, 151, 194
Salas, JoAnne, 182-183
Salas, William, 177-188
Sampson, Phelan, 12
Sampson, Phil, 63
Sanford, Bill, 191
Sanford, Johnny, 279
Sawyer, Grant, 50, 166
Scheid, Ray, 188
Schwartzkopf, Elizabeth, 5, 27, 98, 173
Schwarz, Leo, 283
Schwarz, Marcia, 249-285
Seraphine, Sister, 95-96, 194
Shaver, Jack, 142, 148, 150, 153, 223-224, 235-236, 256
Shaver, Rose, 153
Sheehan, Fran, 107
Sheeketski, Joe, 147
Sherry Netherlands Hotel (New York City), 99
Shore Room (Holiday Hotel, Reno), 173
Sicka, Glenda, 304
Sicka, Jerry, 304
Silver Dollar Bar and Lounge (Harolds Club, Reno), 114-115, 151, 163, 204, 284, 299
Simpson, Jim, 148, 259
Singleton, Dori, 252
Sir Francis Drake Hotel (San Francisco, California), 44
Skinner, Paula, 82
Skynowski, Danny, 192
Slattery, Georgia, 226, 229
Smith, Bettie D., 15, 20, 41, 45-46, 49, 52, 119-120
Smith, D. Joan, 9, 23, 27-29, 31, 38
Smith, David, 5, 11, 299
Smith, Diane, 3-13, 23, 27
Smith, Dora (née Pigeon), 5, 243
Smith, Dorothy (née McPherson), 9, 20, 23-24, 28-29, 31, 37-38, 95, 113-114, 119, 148, 150, 180, 241, 282,
Smith, Fred, 58, 105
Smith, George, 6, 15-21, 28, 41, 45-46, 52, 119-120, 157, 214, 244
Smith, Harold S. Jr. (né Raymond I. Smith), 9-11, 16-18, 23, 28-29, 33-39, 47, 60-64, 71, 75-76, 85-87, 89, 96, 109, 113, 115, 117, 134, 140, 149, 151-152, 157, 162-163, 175, 189, 192-193, 207, 236, 243, 273-275, 282, 284, 297-298
Smith, Harold S. Sr., 3-13, 15, 17, 19-21, 23-29, 31, 35-38, 42, 45-47, 50-52, 59-61, 63-65, 84-87, 89, 93-101, 103, 107, 113, 115, 117, 132, 136-137, 142-144, 148, 150-155, 157, 162-163, 168, 170, 173, 175, 180, 189-194, 197, 199, 203, 206-208, 212-213, 222, 228, 235-242, 244-245, 254, 260-261, 264, 268-275, 280-284, 295, 297-298
Smith, Iola (née Hutchins), 4, 15, 19-20, 37, 41-47, 49-50, 52, 139, 141, 147-148, 155, 157, 191, 206-207, 244
Smith, Judy, 297
Smith, Lois, 3, 6, 9-12, 23, 26, 98, 190, 271
Smith, Olga, 4, 47, 49, 200, 260
Smith, Phyllis, 33-39
Smith, Raymond A., 4, 7, 16-17, 19-21, 23-24, 35, 37, 42, 46-47, 49, 51, 60, 63, 65, 94, 102, 119, 140, 148, 150, 154-155, 157, 162-163, 175, 191-192, 197, 227, 260, 284-285, 297
Smith, Raymond A. Jr., 4
Smith, Raymond I. "Pappy," 4, 7-8, 10, 15-16, 18-20, 23-24, 28-29, 33-36, 38, 41-54, 57-65, 74, 79-80, 88-90, 94-97, 101, 103, 105, 108, 112-113, 115-117, 119-123,125-126, 128, 130-133, 135-137, 139-141, 144, 147, 150-157, 161-164, 166, 173, 175, 190, 195-200, 202-207, 209, 212-213, 219, 221-222, 224-239, 241-244, 249, 252, 254, 257-264, 267-272, 274-276, 279-285, 294-295, 299-301, 306
Smith, Ron, 172
Smith, Virgil, 168
Smithson, Harold, 209
Smoot, Dan, 135
Southworth, George A. "Pop," 18, 135
Sparks Nugget (Sparks, Nevada), 171-172
Speicher, Joe, 70, 75, 256
Spencer, Harry, 171
Sportsman (Reno, Nevada), 18
Stagg, Raymond, 101, 115, 231
Starr, Kay, 29, 33, 275
Stead Air Base (Nevada), 121, 228-229
Stead, Bill, 166
Stephens, Esther, 77, 236-237, 289-290
Stern, Isaac, 5, 98, 173
Streeter, Jack, 20-21, 189-194
Strip (Las Vegas, Nevada), 157
Sullivan, Bobby, 192
Summa Corporation, 188, 191, 245, 265, 270
Sundowner Hotel and Casino (Reno, Nevada), 88
Syphus, Paul, 157

T

Tankel, Ben, 149
Tarn, Steve, 87, 109, 209
Thomas C. Wilson Advertising Agency, 159, 168
Thomas, Eddie, 208
Thompson, Anita, 276
Thorpe, Edward O., 72
Tomerlin brothers, 65
Tout, Mary, 231
Tripp, Larry, 193-194

U

United Airlines, 171
University of Nevada, Reno, 15, 41, 51, 57, 105, 139, 177, 189, 204
Utzinger, Bill, 149

V

Vale, Jerry, 163
Varischetti, Ardith, 62
Vinson, Skip, 199-200, 234, 236, 246
Virginia City Camel Races (Virginia City, Nevada), 164-166
Voss, Darl, 70, 86, 90, 96, 195-214, 228, 230, 256, 295
Voss, Marjorie, 195-196, 201-202, 212-213, 219-285

W

Warwick, Dionne, 163
Webbel Corporation, 20, 191
Webster, Charles "Chuck," 69, 76-77, 79, 81, 86, 88-89, 111, 143, 226-228, 237-239, 243, 256-257, 271, 277
Webster, Evelyn, 82
Webster, Fluff, 226
Webster, Ray, 226
Weir, Billy, 91, 158, 245, 265
Wertheimer, Lou, 5
Wertheimer, Mert, 5
Whear, Bob, 41
Whear, Twyila (née Smith), 15, 20, 41-54
Whitton-Canby, Dorothy, 219-247
Wiedermann, Jody, 183
Wilbur, Jim, 86, 249-285
Wilbur, Sue, 254-255
Williams, Al, 84
Wilson, "Big Bill," 221
Wilson, George, 86, 151, 256
Wilson, Nancy, 163
Wilson, Tom, 133, 164
Winn, Virginia (née Smith), 4
Wittenberg, Ralph, 189
Wolper, David, 168

Z

Zahnd, Pauline, 249-285
Zahnd, Walter, 285